THE Confirming Work OF RELIGION: OR, *Its Great Things made plain,* By their Primary Evidences and Demonstrations.

Whereby the meaneſt in the Church, may ſoon be made able to render a Rational *Account* of their Faith.

Written by *R. Fleming*, Author of the *Fulfilling* of the Scriptures.

Now Publiſhed by *Daniel Burgeſs*.

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THE

Publiſher to the *Reader*.

THE *higheſt Angels* are moſt *humble Creatures*; the Church of God is full of their *Services*, but knoweth next to nothing of their *Names*. Their Works praiſe their *Lord* and ours, but not *Themſelves*. And if the Evangelical Author of this Book could have had his *Will*, the Churches of Chriſt ſhould not have had his *Name*. He would have kept himſelf together a *Benefactor*, and a ſort of *ſtranger* unto them.

Againſt his will it came to be known, that his Book of the *Fulfilling of the Scriptures* was his: And by the Divine Providence it was made neceſſary that his *latter Works* ſhould bear his Name. *Obſcurity* was his *Ambition*; tho' his Gifts and Graces prove too big and too bright to be covered. And, in ſhort, it hath pleaſed the Supream Ruler (and *Fountain of Honour*) to honour him whether he would or no.

The Book firſt named, is followed with the Eulogies of *greateſt Divines*; and is a Manna ſweet to the Taſt of all *ſerious Chriſtians*. His

Epiſtolary Diſcourſe, dedicated to the *Queen's Majeſty*, hath been moſt graciouſly *accepted* by Her; and highly *valued* by thoſe that I muſt think of the beſt of her Subjects. Being, as is his *Diſcourſe of Earthquakes*, a Treaſure of things *Old* and *New*; *Michtam*'s golden *Jewels*. Arguments, ſeveral, not ſo much as touched by any Pen within her Dominions, or beyond them, ſave Mr. *Flemming*'s.

Nevertheleſs it is of this [illegible] *Treatiſe*, that I would ſay, with ſubmiſſion to better Judgments, *There is none like it.* Herein it is, that I think he hath *ſingularly* honoured his God, and I believe his God will very *ſingularly* honour him. For, is any Diſeaſe more *Mortal*, or more *Epidemical*, than Popiſh *Implicit Faith*? And is there any to be named, againſt which we are ſo deſtitute of *Medicines*? Is there extant in *Engliſh*, or any *European* Language, any *one Rationale* of Chriſtianity, in Method ſuited to them who do moſt need it? Hath any *one Writer*, beſide our *Author*, ſet himſelf to teach *Minors* the primary Evidences, and reaſonable Demonſtrations of *Chriſtian Faith*? I will con him my beſt thanks who ſhall name me ſo much as one.

How *ſound* and how *generous* a Medicine this Treatiſe is, let the Wiſe judge. I declare it to be the only one, that on no ſlight Enquiry, I have

have heard of. Being ſo, I no ſooner read it, but I bleſſed *it*, and its unknown *Author*. Privately and publickly I praiſed it, and finding it not to be had in our *Shops*, nor but from *Holland*, (if from thence) to be gotten, I preſently reſolved to *Reprint* it. Soon after, hearing *who* was the Author, and *where* he was, I ſent him notice of that my fixed Reſolution, whether he conſented to it or no. For . . is I argued; that if he were of the *heaverly ſp*. . . breathing in his Book, he could not *gainſay* it; and if he were of *another ſpirit*, for the Churches ſervice, it would be *innocent* and *praiſe-worthy* to croſs it. But bleſſed be God, and bleſſed be he from his Lord and mine, he readily *forgave me this wrong*, and cheerfully I proceeded.

No *Lion* found I in my way; but a *ſorry Worm* I counted the Exclamations of ſome nice Folk, againſt the *Phraſe* and *Style* of this confeſſedly excellent Work. Dutifully I compaſſionated the *weak*; and no leſs the many *ſick*, of curioſity. Who have ſuch Ulcers in their Palats, that they cannot, without *cruel pain*, ſwallow the moſt deſirable Dainties, unleſs they may take them in *Oil* and *Sugar*. Cannot prevail with themſelves to read Periods that require an *attentive mind*, and the leaſt *ſtrain* of their Underſtanding. Wherefore I uſed my Spunge, and took out as many expreſſions of my *Au-*

thor's Native Language, as I thought would diſturb an *Engliſh* Reader. Subſtituting ſuch as appeared ſufficiently intelligible. Which being done, the *Bookſeller* was wiſe enough to ſet the Preſs going.

I ſignified my purpoſe to *Catechiſe* Youth publickly in the *Poſitions* and *Characters* of this Book, one Lords day; as in *W. Aſſembly's Catechiſm*, on the other, by courſe. Which practice other *Miniſters*, ſoon told me, that they would take up. As, I truſt, *many more* will do; foraſmuch, as none can be unſenſible what multitudes of men do *go to Graſs*, on this ſide the *Alps*, as well as on the other; and what a *fantaſtick Faith* common *Proteſtants* do reſt in, as well as *Romaniſts*. Making ſhow of a Faith, (as the Moon of a Light,) whereof not any is in themſelves rooted. Sadly it is ſeen of all, how too too properly we are ſtill named *Brittains*; the Faith of moſt being ſuch a *Paint*, as cannot but *melt* and *vaniſh* in any Trial that is *fiery*.

Brit, is painted; *Tain*, is a Nation.

Memorable are the words of the Learned unhappy *Spalato*; to this effect as I remember. *To ſay that I do not my ſelf know why I do believe a Religious Article, but yet I do believe it, becauſe the Church in which I am doth believe it; it is the ſelf-ſame as to ſay, I do not my ſelf open one of my Eyes, but yet I do ſee the*

thing

thing ſpoken of, becauſe the Company in which I am doth ſee it. The good Lord leſſen among us the number of Men ſo *Abſurd*, and ſo plainly *void of Faith!* He hath already made the *Leaves* of this Book ſo *healing* unto ſome, that in great hopes I commend them unto all. And eſpecially to the *Societies of Young Men*, that hold weekly ſtated Meetings for Edifying Conference. In which, as I tell thoſe of my own Charge, they ſhall not find more *Eligible Arguments* than this Book ſtores them with. Happy they, if, in the beſt ſenſe, they do make them their own! *Lord encreaſe holy Faith, and quench fiery Faction*; ſo prayeth

Bridges-ſtreet near Covent-Garden, Feb. 28.

Daniel Burgeſs.

POSTSCRIPT.

Underſtanding the Forreign Churches *want of this Work, as well as* our own, *I purpoſe ere long to Tranſlate, and ſend it forth in the* Latin Tongue. *Unleſs ſome good hand, of more leiſure, do prevent me.*

THE JUDGMENT OF SOME London Miniſters CONCERNING THIS TREATISE.

THings of unqueſtionable Excellence in themſelves, and of greateſt Importance unto our welfare, have not always the Deepeſt and moſt Conſtant Thoughts beſtown upon them. Witneſs the Satisfaction of our Minds about the Matter, and about the Foundations of our Holy Chriſtian Faith

It ſeems too little obſerved, but it can never be ſufficiently Lamented, what we do obſerve of Proteſtants neglect of the Matter of their Faith. And yet our ſad Experience certifies us, that they are incomparably more

more heedless of acquainting themselves with the Reasons thereof. We have very many that do competently know, what it is to be a Christian, for every single man that can render a Reason, why he ought to be so.

Storms do make men look to their Anchors; and we do not know, but aweful Judgments are hastning on us, (being Remote ones do not awaken us,) to beat us out of our inconsiderately chosen Refuges. Our Precarious and Unexamined Confidences, which in very Propriety are but Fancy, and not Faith built upon any solid Grounds. However, we must all, needs Die; and it is more than probable, that a near Prospect of the Future State, may convincingly show the most obstinate, that the King of Terrours is not to be conquered, and no Miracles are to be wrought, by an Implicit Faith. Or by a way of Religion, that is taken up and walk'd in, meerly for Company.

Pecudum ritu euntes non qà eundum est, sed qà itur. Sen.

Wherefore we give our great Thanks to the Author of every good Gift; who hath drawn this his richly furnished Scribe, to supply us with so very needful a Treatise as is here offered. Some of us do Profess that in reading it, we were surprized with Joy and with Wonder, that a Topick so little Written, Discoursed,

or

or Thought of, ſhould be treated on with ſuch depth of Judgment, and with ſuch Experience as is rarely found in the moſt laudable Writers.

Thro' the Divine Bleſſing which we implore, we hope that we, and our Brethren throughout theſe Nations, ſhall find good ſucceſs of our Peoples uſe of this moſt inſtructive Work. For which, with the excellent Author, (who did but Conſent to this Edition of it;) we are indebted unto the Reverend and Worthy Publiſher, by whoſe means we receive it. We joyn with both of them, in Prayer to the moſt High, that this Rich Seed of the Sower may be made Bread of Life to the Eater.

William Bates.
Mathew Mead.
Thomas Cole.
John Howe.
Mathew Sylveſter.
Daniel Williams.
John Showers

THE

The Author's

PREFACE.

THis ſmall Treatiſe here offered, is on the greateſt Subjects that can fall under the Conſideration of Mankind; and is a Study, which was never more preſſingly called for, than in theſe days, for making Peace with God, and gaining ſuch an Aſſurance of his Truth, as may fully quiet and ſupport the Soul, though all ſenſible Props ſhould be broken, and fail. Great changes do ſurely haſten on this Generation, and the Life of Faith *is in another manner like to be put to Tryal, than ſince the Churches Riſe and Recovery from* Antichriſtian *Bondage. The ſtorm now viſibly grows upon the Churches of Chriſt, though nothing ought to Faint or Shake the Spirits of any, who know their Anchor is ſure and caſt within the Vail; but the ſtrongeſt Difficulties, in following the Lord, (when overcome,) yeild the greateſt Victory, and will be not only matter of Joy here, but to all Eternity, in having with Patience and Hope indured, and got well through a Throng of Temptations and Aſſaults in a reſolute adherence to the Truth. If men think it their Wiſdom to ſecure their Private Intereſt, by dividing it in ſuch a time from the Publick Cauſe of the Reformed Church, and make Light of the greateſt Truths of God now aſſaulted, of the Blood of the Martyrs, yea of their own Eternal State, by any coolneſs or ſhrinking from the ſame; they will find*

find no Temporal Motives, can ever compensate that loss and ruine which inevitably will meet such in the Issue. Yea that these Words of Mordecai to Esther, *(Esth. 4 13, 14.) Have the same Voice, and weight in this day. What is held forth in the following work, I may with humble Confidence say, was under some pressure to have such clear Evidence and Quieting Persuasion of Divine Truth, as made it less easie to have my own Spirit satisfied herein, than possibly it may be to others; for if it were not from that blessed Assurance of the Lords being God, of the Revelation of Christ, and of the Glory to come, I should not know what could be comforting, or make a rational Being desireable. Some singular Ingagements I judge my self also to stand under, for putting to my Seal to the Truth and Faithfulness of God in his Word, from many signal Confirmations hereof in the course of my Pilgrimage, if such a poor Testimony might be of any weight. Let the Blessed Lord, graciously accept this small offering to him, for the Interest of his Truth, by so mean an Instrument, and give some Fruit hereof, that may abide, and be found in the day of Christ.*

I hope the Reader may find by a Perusal of the I. *Chapter of what Serious Use and Intent the* II. *is, yea that in this day it was not Unseasonable or Incongruous to the foregoing Subject what is held forth in the* III. *Chapter. But Oh! it is sad and amazing to think how few are under that weight of Religion, as once to have a Serious Inquiry on the Grounds and Reasons thereof, and to account the most special Assistances to their Faith to be the greatest Helpers of their Joy within time.*

THE

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THE

The True and Infallible WAY For attaining a confirmed State in Religion, &c.

CHAP. I.

The Primitive Confirmation in the truth of Chriſtianity, held forth and cleared, in its continued neceſſity and uſe to this day, in ſeven Poſitions.

Poſit. I. *THAT nothing can be of a more ſad and threatning aſpect on the preſent ſtate of Religion in all the Churches of Chriſt, than that utter eſtrangement, moſt are under, to the true grounds of Faith, and to thoſe fundamental differences betwixt Chriſtianity, and every falſe way, which no pretended Religion can lay claim to.* The reaſons of the *Poſition*, are theſe. I. That it is too viſibly manifeſt, how no men in the world know ſo little of their own profeſſion, of any human art or ſcience, as ſuch

who bear the Name of Chriſtians. Or are ſo generally ſtrangers to the Truth and firmneſs of the Principles thereof, for maintaining either a due Valuation, or powerful ſence of the ſame on their Soul; ſo that an implicit and *Traditional Profeſſion* is the only part and propriety which moſt can claim in the Truth, and Doctrine they profeſs. II. That very rarely alſo is any Serious Perſonal Inquiry and Tryal, if there be indeed ſuch a thing as an *Experimental and Soul-quickning Religion* in the Earth. That can bear the expence of the moſt diſmal and afflicting times, and hath ſo great a temporal Revenue, as Peace with God, an Immediate Communion with him, the Joy and Comforts of the Holy *Ghoſt*, when we are under ſuch preſſures of trouble as are above the ſupport of Nature. III. That the furtheſt account, why moſt go under the name of Chriſtians, rather than of any other form, can riſe no higher than Cuſtom and Education, that it did beſpeak them from their Birth, and was the Religion of their Anceſtors; yea become in that manner natural to them as the Cuſtoms and Language of their Country. Which are grounds that would determine to the very oppoſite Profeſſion, if they were ſtated under the ſame circumſtances, and had the ſame motives to be *Mahumetans*; ſince it is ſure theſe can found no other Aſſent, than is ſuitable to the Nature and Strength thereof. IV. That thus it is plain the moſt numerous part of Viſible Profeſſours; are deſtitute of any defence from internal motives, and ſolid conviction of the truth they profeſs, upon its own evidence; and there was never more cauſe to fear, ſome unuſual

uſual apoſtacy from the very viſible profeſsion of Chriſt, upon any violent tryal and aſſault this way. When ſuch find it more eaſy to render up their Religion, than to adhere to the ſame, under ſtrong temptations, who yet never knew that ſubſtance, advantage, or certainty herein, as could preponderate with the want of all external motives for ſuch a profeſsion.

Poſit. II. *That thus one of the higheſt ſervices of theſe times, for the publick good of the Church, does convincingly lye here; to have* the faith of aſſent *to the truth and doctrine of Chriſt, in a clear and firm certainty of the judgment, on its own evidence, more vigorouſly promoted and the proper means and aſſiſtances, which the Lord hath given for this end, in ſome other manner yet improved, than ſeems to be at this day, for a more univerſal uſe.* The grounds to inforce the neceſsity hereof are theſe; I. That it's ſure wherever the Goſpel is revealed to men, it comes with ſo full an aſſurance of underſtanding, and ſufficiency of objective evidence, as can admit of no poſsible doubtfulneſs herein. Which is the credit and glory of our religion, that in no other way it doth require acceptance, but with the furtheſt conviction of evidence. II. Becauſe the expreſs deſign and tendency of this bleſſed revelation, is no leſs to found ſuch a rational aſſurance in the judgment, of its truth, than to ingage the will and conſent, for imbracing thereof; and though ſuch great demonſtrations for this end can only, *in ſuo genere*, have a convincing influence to perſwade the underſtanding, yet are they of ſuch weight here, as next to the demonſtration of the Spirit of God,

they are the greateſt means to bring up mens aſſent to a full and quieting reſt on that ſecurity to which they muſt truſt themſelves for ever, and to let them ſee, that this even here by the way, is aſſuredly full, though not yet their enjoyment. III. Becauſe this faith of aſſent, ſhould be firſt followed in the order of nature, as being the very firſt principle of converſion, to know and be ſure, that God hath ſent his ſon into the world to ſave ſinners; wherein as the Holy Ghoſt is not the Objective, but the Efficient Cauſe of our Faith, ſo is not the internal work and Teſtimony, he gives on the Soul the firſt Teſtimony, but muſt ſtill have reſpect to the revelation of the Word without, and ſuch demonſtrative evidences thereof, wherewith it is revealed to the world. Nor may any ever ſeparate, that which God hath himſelf ſo indiſſolubly joyned. IV. That there is ſo convincing a neceſſity and uſe hereof to the Church, and in a ſpecial way with reſpect to the youth, for a more firm laying of the groundwork of their Chriſtian profeſſion, and for the ſeed-plot of a bleſſed and deſirable growth amongſt ſuch in this day; that they might thus know early, ſomething of theſe primary grounds and demonſtrations of their faith; ſo alſo is it a ſtudy of that high importance, as I humbly judge ſhould be of notable uſe for a Manuduction in the firſt place to Students of Divinity, before they launch forth in that vaſt and immenſe Ocean of the ſpeculative part thereof; and for being at ſome greater advantage thus for carrying on ſuch a confirming work in the Church in their future ſervice. V. Yea of what uſe might this be with reſpect to many, who may be ſore haunted

haunted, with hidden and dreadful temptations to infidelity, and to weaken them in the very foundations of their faith; who are wholly unfurniſhed of any ſuch grounds and arguments in their judgment to repel the ſame: and it is certain that to believe firmly the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, that God was manifeſted in our nature, to ſave man, is with reſpect to the object a much higher act of faith, than to believe, that he will ſave us; ſince as the one doth unſpeakably more tranſcend all human reaſon than the other, ſo doth the Apoſtle thus argue from the greater to the leſs, Rom. 8. 32. that he who gave his own ſon to the death; will he not alſo with him give us all things?

Poſit. III. *That ſuch a Confirming Work, was moſt ſpecially followed in the Practice of the Primitive Times, and one of the great Ends of the Miniſtry of the* Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, *to have this Faith of Aſſent and Doctrinal Certainty thereof, on its proper Grounds and Evidences, deeply founded in Mens Judgment; is ſo clear as cannot come under Debate.* I. That this way did the great Author of our Profeſſion himſelf take, not only by the Authority of his Word, and the Power and Energy of Grace, but with that Convincing Evidence and Demonſtration of his Truth to Mens Underſtanding, as might found alſo a firm and rational Aſſurance hereof. II. That for this End, he did pray the Father, *Joh.* 17. 21. and was ſo much preſſed herein, that ſo great an external Demonſtration of the Truth of the Goſpel, in the Concord and Unity of his People, might be kept clear, that the World might thus believe that he was ſent of God, and have a deeper Conviction hereof wrought in them, by ſuch an E-

vidence. III. That one ſpecial Intent of the Goſpel of *Luke*, was for this end, *Luke* 1. 4. That men might know not only the things themſelves by a naked Relation, but the Certainty of theſe things, wherein they had been formerly Inſtructed. IV. That herein did the Miniſtry of *Apollos* ſo brightly ſhine forth, *Act.* 18. 28. And was then of moſt ſingular uſe to the Church, by that clearneſs of rational Conviction and demonſtrative Arguments for the Truth of Chriſt, as the greateſt gainſayers could not withſtand. V. That it's ſure it was then without Exception expreſly required of the meaneſt within the Church, to be always ready to render the Reaſons of their Hope to all who asked: and not only to know what they did Believe, but why they did ſo, as is clear, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15. This could not be by bringing forth of internal Evidences, for Conviction of others, but by giving them an account of the moſt cogent grounds and demonſtrations of the Goſpel, as might be moſt prevalent, and confirming to the weak, and leave others inexcuſable; and ſeems to have been then ſpecially preſſed in theſe Primitive Times, as a proper Teſt of their Chriſtian Profeſſion. VI. And we ſee herein alſo, how much theſe excellent *Bereans* were taken up, and were ſo highly commended of the *Holy Ghoſt*, *Act.* 17. 11. To know the *demonſtrative* part of Chriſtianity, and by its own evidence, with that intire harmony and conſent of the Scripture therein, and their being thus diligently intent in that comparing-work of Religion, to ſee the truth thereof not ſingly and apart by themſelves alone, but in that joynt-union & coherence wherein they ſtand, each in their own room, for confirming

and

and giving light to other. VII. That this was the way alſo, wherein the Goſpel did come to the Gentile Church is clearly ſhewed 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 5. *Not in Word only, but as in Power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, ſo alſo in much Aſſurance of Underſtanding, upon its own Evidence*, which was that way, it did ſo wonderfully prevail over the world againſt nature, and the ſtream of fleſh and blood, that ſtood in the furtheſt oppoſition thereto. VIII. That one of the greateſt ſervices of the Apoſtles in their viſiting the Churches, did expreſly lie here, Acts 14. 22. To confirm the ſouls of the Diſciples in the firſt place in the certainty of their faith, and then in exhorting them to continue in the ſame, ſo as they might follow the Lord, with the furtheſt light and aſſurance of Mind, amidſt the great Tryals of ſuch a time. IX. That it's this way alſo the World is rendred inexcuſable for their misbelief of the Goſpel, when under ſuch ſufficiency of means given for this end, by ſo great a diſcovery of the confirming evidences of its rruth, ſo as they can have no pretence herein, but an obſtinacy and reſolution not to be convinced; on which ground doth our Bleſſed Lord teſtify, that it was no want of light, upon the certainty of his truth, why men did not receive it, but that they loved darkneſs better than light, becauſe their deeds were evil; and when ſuch clear, rational, and convincing evidences are laid open to their view, how moſt men poſſibly can get theſe put by or rejected, is not eaſy to comprehend, but that a real Irritation and torment of Spirit, from ſuch clearneſs of evidence, doth thus more tend to harden than convince.

Poſit. IV. *That there is a continued neceſſity of ſuch a* Confirmation in the Faith *to this day, what*

ever can be objected of ſo long a conſent and preſcription of time in the profeſſion thereof, is fully demonſtrable on theſe grounds. I. Becauſe it is ſure, the Chriſtian faith doth ſtill need theſe aſſiſtances and it is a ſtrange miſtake, that only for *Heathens* and *Atheiſts*, ſuch confirming evidences of the ſame ſhould be propoſed, but not for any under a viſible profeſſion, when the whole of *Divinity*, and *Doctrine* of *our Faith*, is ſo full of demonſtrative arguments, for the daily uſe of the moſt eſtabliſhed Chriſtians in their paſſage through time. II. That as the higheſt motives to all ſerious godlineſs and the moral duties of Chriſtianity muſt needs be from its known certainty to us, ſo is the continued uſe thereof to be ſtill the ſame. III. That theſe numerous tryals and conflicts of Chriſtians now, do no leſs call for ſome higher eſtabliſhment in the truth on which they muſt alone reſt when all viſible props fail in their judgments, than of ſupporting grace; nor is it conceivable how men can this day walk in the light of any true joy and comfort, without a more ſolid aſſurance of their being on ſafe grounds herein than moſt ſeem to reckon. IV. Becauſe the revelation of the Goſpel, and of an eternal ſtate in another world, is ſo great and wonderful, as it's ſtrange how this is not the higheſt intereſt of mens life, to have their faith more deeply confirmed on the furtheſt tryal of their ſecurity now by the way herein, who muſt ſhortly make ſo great a tryal thereof at death; for if we were but once come thus far as to ask our own Soul what the *Chriſtian Faith* indeed is, that we are thus called to believe, it could not poſſibly but beget ſome extaſie of wondering at the greatneſs thereof, and to reckon any light and implicit aſſent to the ſame as a degree

both

both of Atheiſm and Indifferency in this matter. V. Though there be no conflict with Heathens, as in the firſt times, yet was ſuch a ſpirit never at a higher pitch than it is now to take off all firm aſſent to the greateſt principles of truth, when Atheiſm ſeems to be at its laſt attempt in the world, and we are fallen in ſo amazing an hour of the power of darkneſs as makes theſe latter times more remarkably perillous and trying than the firſt. VI. Yea if ſuch a confirming work, be one of the greateſt means to advance the repute and honour of Religion, when its wonted awe and veneration is ſo far loſt, and to awake men to deeper impreſſions of its truth, when ſo few ſeem now under any ſuch weight; then it is certain there was never more need of the ſame than in this day.

Poſit. V. *That ſuch a Service to the* Church, *doth not only reſpect the more knowing, inquiſitive, and judicious part thereof, but the meaneſt Profeſſours of Religion alſo, of whom this is neceſſarily required, is Evident on theſe grounds.* I. Becauſe each Chriſtian ſhould have undoubtedly ſuch a *ballaſt* on their own Soul, of the ſolid and rational Grounds of their Faith, as well as thoſe of greater parts and Endowments: the promoting of which were it more deeply conſidered, I dare humbly adventure to ſay would be found one of the choiceſt means to promote Chriſtianity this day. II. Becauſe this is not to drive any to doubt or queſtion the leaſt ſincere degree of *aſſent*, though it be not with ſuch ſtrength of evidence as in others, nor can by that formal argumentation give the ſame account thereof; ſince a few grounds this way may ſpecially help to ſome ſolid conviction & confirming of their mind, when they may be ignorant

rant of many other cogent arguments for this end; but 'tis certain alſo the greater clearneſs of evidence doth ſtill in the appointed way of means lead in to a more firm and ſtrong aſſent of the judgment, to the truth of our Religion. III. Becauſe the ſtrength of the foundation in it ſelf cannot be enough if it be not with ſuch a known evidence, as men may build firmly and with aſſurance thereon: Nor hath the Lord thus only deſigned to give his people an infallible and ſure teſtimony to adventure on, but that it ſhould be made ſure alſo to them. IV. Becauſe none can in truth ſay that *Jeſus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghoſt*, 1 *Cor.* 22. 3. by which is not to be underſtood ſo much the neceſſity of ſupernatural grace, for a ſaving faith, but that none can give a true aſſent and confeſſion of the ſame, but from theſe grounds and arguments which are revealed by the Holy Ghoſt unto men for this end; and as it's certain that theſe *Characters & evidence of Divinity*, which are imprinted on the whole revelation of the Goſpel, may be clear and demonſtrative to our judgment, ſo are they as truly *divine*, as the doctrine which is confirmed thereby. V. Becauſe there can be no poſſible cauſe for Unbelief of the truth from any intricate obſcureneſs of the ſame, when the Lord hath given ſuch great aſſiſtances to our faith to be *as milk for babes* as well as *meat to ſtrong men*. And though it be objected that the furtheſt objective evidence of the Goſpel, with ſo clear and ſtrong a conveyance thereof, is yet ſo little operative on moſt; the ſame might be ſaid alſo of the whole letter of the Scripture; but tho this tends not in the leaſt to reſolve our Religion into any meer exerciſe of reaſon, and leaves the whole work of the Spirit, in its energy and operati-

operation therewith on mens ſouls, intire; yet doth it fully evince ſuch a ſufficiency of evidence with the Chriſtian faith, as makes any doubtfulneſs herein ſimply impoſſible, through want of the greateſt advantage of means; yea ſuch as are of another kind than to induce only *a probable perſwaſion* of the ſame. VI. Becauſe it is one of the ſaddeſt Symptoms of the preſent State of Religion, that ſo few almoſt in whole Congregations can give any clear Aſſent to the Truth and Certainty thereof, but to Amazement both live and die Strangers to the ſame, yea how many of theſe who are otherwiſe Serious in Religion, yet have their *Faith ſtarved* this way, and are deſtitute of any ſuch ſupport; but as it is not the *numerouſneſs of Profeſſours*, but the *Strength and ſolidity of their Faith*, wherein the Churches Strength moſt lies, and hath more flouriſhed in a few ſuch to beget a greater Awe and Veneration of Religion amongſt Men, than at other times in the greateſt Multitude; ſo is it the Glory of Divine Truth, that it can ſubſiſt by its own proper Evidence, and preſerve its Station in the worſt of times, when all External Arguments do moſt viſibly ceaſe.

Poſit. VI. *That it's fully demonſtrable and clear, how no ſimple inſtructing of men in the* general Principles of Religion, *can be the proper and adequate means for ſuch a Faith of Aſſent to the Truth thereof, on its own Evidence, or anſwer that* Apoſtolick Pattern of laying the Foundation, *Heb.*6.2. *But that ſome ſpecial Duties elſe are called for to ſo high an end; ſuch wherein not only that true Primitive Confirmation in the Chriſtian Faith might have ſome Practical uſe, but we might alſo Hope therewith, for a more remarkable out-letting of Confirming Influences of the*

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Spirit of God. What is to be underſtood herein I ſhall humbly offer in a few *particulars.*

I. That it is one of the greateſt concerns of the *Miniſterial Work,* and of the *Key of Doctrine,* to have all who hear the Goſpel, in the *firſt* place preſſed to take Religion ſo far to Heart, as to make a ſerious inquiry into the Grounds and Reaſons hereof, and thus to know their being on ſure ground herein, not becauſe they know not another way, but becauſe they know this is the alone way of Truth, to which they dare truſt their Immortal Souls.

II. That for this End the Supream Truths of Relion be repreſented with that certainty of *Evidence, and Demonſtration,* as both ſuch great and marvellous things do require, and the temper of ſuch a gain-ſaying Age now calls for; and to have this preſſed more on mens Judgment and Conſcience, that the *things of God,* which are of the *higheſt Conſequence, Reality and Subſtance,* can have no poſſible Reception by any implicite or probable belief thereof, nor can admit any pretence for the ſame, when the Lord hath given ſuch kind of Proofs and Evidence, as leaves mens darkneſs herein without any ſhaddow of excuſe.

II. That it peculiarly belongs to the *Catechetical Work of Religion,* to take ſome account of the meaneſt Profeſſours thereof, and with a ſpecial reſpect to the *Youth*; of their *Faith of Aſſent* to the Doctrine of Chriſt, on what *grounds* and certainty of evidence this is founded, and for their inſtructing therein, as well as in the *general Principles* of Religion; when one of the moſt ruining things to the Church lies here, that the Profeſſion of moſt is laid in ſo deep an Ignorance, as they have almoſt nothing to ſay for the ſame,

ſame, but a naked Affirmation. I know the difficulty hereof for the weak may be objected, but without juſt cauſe; ſince as the Prime Truths of Religion are few, eaſie and plain for the meaneſt Capacity, ſo alſo are the *Primary Evidences and Demonſtrations of our Faith*, if ſuch once with that deſire did ſearch after the ſame, as for a hidden and invaluable Treaſure; wherein this reſpect ſhould be ſtill had, to difference betwixt what is Initial and of a more fundamental concern for the weak, and what may tend to an higher growth and increaſe of others.

III. It ſhould be of greateſt uſe and advantage alſo for the ſame end, that the *young growth* now coming up in the Church, were put to give ſome *explicit Evidence* of their Conſent and Choice of the Profeſſion of Chriſt, ſo far as may witneſs a Ratification of the *Baptiſmal Covenant*, now as their own proper Deed, wherein they were implicitely ingaged in their Infancy. Some ſpecial Grounds and Reaſons for this, are; I. Becauſe God will have his Service freely entred in and upon *choice*, as that way which is moſt agreeable to his Honour; for as the *Covenant* binds mutually, ſo do the *Seals* thereof alſo, and therefore upon our part is *Baptiſm a Sacramental Oath of Allegiance to God.* II. Becauſe it tends to a more reſolute and firm adherence to the Service of God, that this buſineſs ſhould be perſonally brought home to Mens Conſcience, eſpecially before their firſt admittance to the Sacrament of the Lord's ſupper, and thus to ingage them as *Joſhua* did, *Chap.* 24. 22. *Ye are witneſſes againſt your ſelves herein, and they ſaid, We are witneſſes.* III. Becauſe this is expreſly held forth 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. where *Baptiſm*

tiſm is called the anſwer of a good conſcience toward God, upon this ground, that ſuch then who were come to years of knowledge, were perſonally brought to confirm by their own conſent that ſolemn Ingagement and Dedication by Baptiſm to be the Lords, and therefore it is called ἐπερώτημα, which is *vox juris*, and ſignifies, *ſponſio, & ſtipulatio publica inter Chriſtianum, & Dominum Chriſtum*, as the moſt Judicious Commentators on that Scripture do clearly render it; and ſo this was a ſpecial part of the Primitive Practice, not only with reſpect to ſuch, who were Converted from *Heatheniſm*, but were born within the Church, and Partakers of that *Seal of Baptiſm in their Infancy*, to bring them to anſwer to that great Demand of the Covenant, Do you now Conſent upon *Evidence and Choice*, to be the Lords, and to be a Subject of his Kingdom, and embrace the Laws thereof, and do you thus in Sincerity and Truth declare the ſame wherein you have a good Conſcience before God? And of what bleſſed Fruit and Advantage ſhould this be both for the Increaſe and Honour of the Goſpel, if this were more deeply taken to Heart for ſome Practical uſe, according to the *Rule*, and *Primitive Pattern* in the Churches of Chriſt?

IV. It were ſpecially deſirable alſo, that there be ſome *clear view and ſummary* by it ſelf, of the moſt *cogent Grounds and Demonſtrations of the Chriſtian Faith*, with reſpect both to the *Doctrinal, Hiſtorical, and Prophetical* part thereof, and in that manner accommodated, as the meaneſt within the Church might have ſuch a help ſtill at their hand, and thus with the leaſt expence of time, be provided of ſuch Arguments and Reaſons, as ſhould tend

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(through the Bleſſing of God) not only to the furtheſt rational Aſſent, and Certainty of the Truth of their Profeſſion, but to give a moſt ſpecial ſupport of Mind againſt that inward Tryal of Satans Temptations and Fiery Darts this way; yea is ſuch a mean, that in the ſerious Improvement hereof by having ſuch Evidences once brought in on Mens Judgment and Conſcience, ſo as to ſee with their own Eyes the Truth of the ſame, I muſt humbly judge, there is nothing, next to the internal work of the Spirit, of this kind, might tend more to promote the Kingdom of Chriſt in this day.

Poſit. VII. *That as there are ſome more* ſignal Periods of time, *to which a greater brightneſs and increaſe of Light hath reſpect under the* New Teſtament; *ſo doth there now ſeem to be ſome remarkable Call and Excitement, to ſuch a* Confirming Work, *in this day about the Chriſtian Faith; when we may hope that a more* ſolemn and reſtoring time of Religion *in the World, is on a near approach, (though all ſenſible evidence would ſeem to controul this) and may be now more looked after, and prepared for, under a ſuitable Impreſſion of theſe* Grounds *for the ſame.* I. That the promiſed time of the *Converſion of the Jews* doth aſſuredly draw near; and whatever be judged by ſome of the Lords immediate Appearance herein by a *Miracle*, yet is it unqueſtionable that nothing in the way of means could be more promiſing and hopeful to promote this great end, than by promoting ſo great a Service as this for the Chriſtian Church. II. That a greater extent alſo of the Profeſſion of Chriſt amongſt the *Gentiles*, and rending of the Vail that is now over many dark Nations, ſeemeth clearly inſured therewith; and what a hopeful E-

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vidence ſhould this be if ſuch a *Publick and Catholick Spirit* were more ſeen, how to advance the higheſt Ends of Religion on ſuch an account without reſpect to any partial or divided Intereſt? Yea that this bleſt Zeal of God might in that manner appear to have the dark World get a more clear and convincing proſpect of the *higheſt rational Demonſtrations of Chriſtianity*, as might through the Lords Gracious Concurrence bring men once to an *Inquiſitive and Serious Spirit* about the ſame. Oh that ſuch may be raiſed up in this diſmal hour with ſomething of that ancient Spirit, to travel with deſire for the *Salvation of Mankind*, and of whom it may be ſaid, as of bleſt *Nehemiah*, *theſe are indeed come to ſeek the welfare of their People*, in their greateſt Intereſt. III. And this farther excitement we are now under for this end, in a time when Popery ſeems to be upon one of its laſt and greateſt Aſſaults againſt the Church; ſince it's ſo clear that what ever tends to Confirm Men in Chriſtianity from their own Tryal and Inquiry upon the Confirming Evidences thereof, muſt have the ſame Native reſult, to make ſuch Confirmed Proteſtants; yea nothing is more demonſtrable than that the Method and Grounds that are taken both to ingage and fix men in the Popiſh Profeſſion, have the ſame rational Tendency to promote Atheiſm, and to give Infidels the greateſt Advantage to reject the Profeſſion of Chriſt. *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear*, Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Confirming Work of Religion, reduced to Practical Use; in some clear view of those Primary Grounds, and Demonstrations of our Faith, which none should pretend Ignorance of, who enter the Profession of Christ upon choice, and Certainty of Evidence.

SECTION I.

Qu. I. WHat Reasons, *and* Demonstrations, *can you give for so great a Faith as that of the* Glorious Being of God, *who is invisible to humane Sense; since this is the Foundation of all Religion?*

Ans. Though this is Principally founded on the Sacred Truth and Authority of his own Word, yet I am with the furthest Infallible *Evidence* confirmed herein; I. That it can be no more sure, that this marvellous frame of the Heavens and Earth hath a being, and is the Object of our Sense, than that a Supream Infinite Wisdom and Power must be the first cause hereof, and it were simply impossible it could ever otherwise have been. II. That he hath thus made himself *Visible* to our Eyes, by such a *visible World*, and in so exquisite an Order and Correspondence to support the same, as nothing stands alone by it self, but in a line of mutual respect, which runs through the whole Creation. We may as clearly thus see, that God is, as that there is an invisible Soul in a living Body. III. That this Harmony is amongst things, in their own Nature

ſo Contrary and Deſtructive to other, for to hold this wonderful frame, as all muſt abandon Reaſon, or ſee an infinitely wiſe Conduct herein; and no need of Extraordinary *Miracles*, to Confirm what the whole Conſtitutions of Nature do Witneſs. IV. That this rare frame of man could never have come in being, but by him who could Unite ſuch different Subſtances as a *Material Body*, and an *Immaterial Soul*, in ſo near and marvellous an Union. V. That there is ſuch an univerſal Conſent of Mankind in all Ages thereto, as ſhews Religion to be founded in the very Nature of Man, and as Eſſential to his Being, as his Reaſon is, yea that the ultimate difference of Man from the Beaſt, and moſt eſſential Property of humane Nature lies here. VI. That though every one be an Enemy to what torments him; yet it was never poſsible for an Atheiſt to free himſelf from that unavoidable Senſe and Fear of a *Deity*; nor, in a World ſo much loſt in Wickedneſs, could he ever extinguiſh the awe of Religion, or make any rational Oppoſition to this greateſt Article of the common Faith of Mankind. VII. That the Reaſon of the whole Conſtitution of Nature, and viciſsitude of things here, is ſo great, as, without ſhutting out the uſe of Reaſon, we cannot but ſee, how nothing poſsibly could have been better; and that any want hereof in the whole frame of the Univerſe, would be as the Diſlocation of a joynt of the Body, and were not conceivable to be otherwiſe than it is by Infinite Wiſdom appointed. VIII. That it's ſimply impoſsible that God Bleſſed for ever ſhould not exiſt, or that this Univerſe, (which is a work ſo highly becoming the greatneſs of its Maker) could poſsibly ſubſiſt for one hour or minute

minute of time, without a Supream Independent Power and Being, on which all Visible Beings have their Dependance, since they cannot depend upon nothing. IX. That such is the absolute necessity of the *Faith also of a God-Head*, as without this the state of Mankind could not *morally* subsist, or any possible Order, Subjection, Piety, and Justice, be to support Human Society, but as *Bradwardine* saith, *O quam necesse est hunc esse, quem impossibile est non esse.* X. How plain is it, that men cannot but see these effects of his Power on the Conscience, in the Certainty of a Prophetick Light and Discovery as hath been oft given of Future things, and in the undeniable Truth of Miracles, so as such a *Prodigy* as a profest *Atheist*, can have no claim to humane Race, as a rational Being, more than the greatest *monster* in Nature to be a true man.

Qu. II. *What doth witness the* Worlds *not being* Eternal, *and its first Original and Beginning from God, to Confirm your Faith herein, by rational Demonstration?*

Ans. I. That Eternity is an Incommunicable Perfection of the first Cause, and that which is made up of corruptible and perishing things, as this Visible World cannot possibly be in it self *Eternal*; nor could ever produce it self, since thus it must both be and not be at the same time, which is the greatest Contradiction. II. That if there be such a thing now *as time*, there can be no judging of Days, Years and Ages to be Infinite, or how one thing in a continued order, should thus go before another, without coming to some first beginning. III. If there be a gradual Increase of human Learning on the Earth, and a further discovery of

Arts and Sciences; and the greateſt Experiments and Inventions have been but of a late Riſe and Date; then can there not poſſibly be an Eternal Succeſſion of Mankind, with a continued Progreſs and Experience this way; nor can it be that but of late one part of the World is known and diſcovered to another. IV. That ſo ſhort an Hiſtory as we have in the moſt Ancient Records of time, were wholly Inconſiſtent with ſuch an Eternal Duration, or that Infinite Ages preceding ſhould leave no remembrance to Poſterity, when ſo ſmall a meaſure of time, as a few *thouſand years*, have left ſo much. V. Nor could men beget men Eternally without going back to ſome firſt man, who could not beget himſelf. VI. That if Eternity be preferable to time, then ſhould not the excellenteſt being in the Earth, *Man*, be thus corruptible, and only this inanimate Maſs of the Earth Eternal. VII. That infinite Ages paſt, though they ſhould have but multiplied the rate of man in an Age, to two or three more, ſhould have come to that at laſt, that the whole Precinct of the Earth could not poſſibly bear the product of ſuch an infinite Increaſe; and no Wars or extraordinary Judgments were ever yet known to be ſuch, as to reſtrain ſuch an unavoidable growth.

Qu. III. *What infallible Evidence to Reaſon is there of* a Supream Providence, *both in the* Conſervation, and Government of the World; *for Confirming your Faith of the Scripture herein?*

Anſ. I. That it is clear the ſupport of this great frame of the Univerſe, with that continued and regular courſe of nature herein, is as ſimply impoſſible without an infinite Divine Power, as its firſt Being and Creation. II. That ſuch an extent of Provi-

Providence as respects so innumerable Objects, with such a Contrariety both of Qualities and Passions in the same, must needs be from an Infinite and Intelligent Cause. III. That all things to this day, continue in that established Order of second Causes, wherein God hath placed them by a Law so Visibly Imprinted on the Nature of things without Reason, that they do as exactly answer the same in their proper Course and Station, as if they had a rational Knowledg of their Duty. IV. That Universal respect, the *Sun in the Firmament* hath to things here below, though at so great a distance, which doth neither cease, or grow weary to send forth its beams and hidden influences to the meanest Creatures, may let us clearly see, how it hath the same Visible Use and End to Confirm an Incomprehensible and Infinite Providence about the meanest things, as well as the greatest. V. That immediate Precedency of the Soul in that lesser World of Man, bears the same Evidence therewith, which though we never saw with our eyes, yet doth undeniably actuate the whole body in its Functions, as the proper Spring of every act and Motion there. VI. It is thus further confirmed, by these continued vicissitudes and turns of *Summer and Winter*, and *of day and night*, that man might have, both Light for his Labour, and Darkness as a covering for his Rest. VII. By such Visible Discoveries of *Divine Judgment, and Execution* of his Laws on men here, as all may see his Hand therein, who yet will not hear his Voice in the Word. VIII. By these extraordinary and wonderful Works of Providence, which have been in all Ages. IX. By so evident a restraint both over *Devils, and wicked Men* without which they would quickly disturb the whole frame

of this Earth, and make it uninhabitable for Human Society; if their being thus Bounded and Chained, were not as Visible, as the Certainty of their Being? X. By such a *Natural Obligation* to Moral Duties, with the Sence of a difference betwixt good and evil, as is founded in the very rational Nature of Man, that none can possibly root out, even where the Scripture is not known. XI. By that Natural Confidence also in God, which all Men have, and recourse to him on any present extream hazard, to Witness not only that the most High bears Rule in the Kingdoms of men, but that the Sence and Evidence hereof is unavoidable.

Qu. IV. *But doth this great* Administration of Providence, *about human Affair, as unchangeably appear, in a* differencing *betwixt the Righteous and the Wicked, by some Recompence to the One, and Punishment to the Other, as in the established course of Nature?*

Ans. It is certain that such as desire a Confirming of their Faith herein, want it not, with the furtheſt Evidence, but may ever see that exact Conformity in the whole Dispensation of Providence, to the Rectitude and Perfection of the Divine Nature, and how a firm belief *that God is*, and *that he is a Rewarder of them that Diligently seek him*, is one and the same Faith; when we cannot but see, I. That natural sense of good and evil, and essential difference betwixt the same, which is so firmly founded in the Reason of all Mankind, as no human Laws or Custom could ever take this off their Conscience, or make an indifference herein, without extinguishing the very Nature of Man; to shew that Eternal and Unchangeable difference, which

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the Holy Nature of God hath put betwixt them. II. That we ſee the worſt of Men ſo conſtrain'd to an awful Senſe and Regard of *Truth and weldoing*, and to acknowledge the Lovelineſs and Excellency hereof, as does make them ſeek their own repute by a falſe ſhew and counterfeit of the ſame; and gives ſuch a Being and Riſe to that dreadful Impoſture of *Hypocriſie*. III. That it's the *Truths* Priviledge ever to outlive *Falſhood*, and prevail over the ſame, yea to have the greater Triumph after its ſoreſt Conflicts; and how this is of as fundamental a Conſtitution in the courſe of Providence, as the moſt firm Eſtabliſhment of Nature. IV. That in no time ſince man was formed in the Earth, doth true *Joy and Serenity of Mind*, ceaſe to be the Native reſult of *welldoing*, or the *Fruit of Righteouſneſs to be Peace and Aſſurance of Mind*, nor hath it ever wanted a Witneſs, even before any Word given of the Lords taking Pleaſure herein. V. That it's ſo evident, in the moſt diſmal times, what a publick *Bleſſing* ſuch are, who by more extraordinary Tryals have been put to the higheſt Exerciſe of their Grace and Patience; yea how Viſibly ſuch have been promoted to the moſt honourable Service for God, and to advance the Credit of Religion before Men, who on the firſt ſight and view have been accounted the moſt miſerable of any. VI. Whilſt, *on the other hand*, it may be ever ſeen, how with the greateſt *Proſperity* of the wicked here, there are *Puniſhments of another kind* Diſpenſed, and more dreadful than any outward Affliction, ſuch as *judicial Obſtinacy, and Blindneſs of Mind in Oppoſition to God*, even when their own ruine is made Viſible to them herein. VII. How oft men are thus evi-

dently condemned to be happy in this World by ſome ſtrange meaſure of *Temporal Succeſs and Proſperity*, before ſome great Fall and Ruine, as the Iſſue hereof in the laſt ſcene of Providence, doth fully atteſt. VIII. That it's ſeen alſo, how Sin doth ever bring its own *Puniſhment* with it, in ſome begun Degree both of Shame and Torment; and, as *Seneca*, an Heathen, could ſay, *That Wickedneſs was the moſt exquiſite Contriver of humane Miſery*, ſo the World likewiſe may ſee how a preſent immunity from Judgment is no releaſe, but when its Sentence is not *ſpeedily Executed*, yet is it at laſt ſurely executed. IX. And how evident is it, that the greateſt haters of Godlineſs are yet inforced to juſtifie the ſame and the Chriſtians choice herein, as the greateſt Wiſdom, upon any ſurprizing State and Extremity; yea how ſuch would be glad to joyn Intereſts then with ſuch in their Death, whom they moſt contemned in their Life.

Qu. V. *How is it Convincing and Demonſtrable, that God hath given any clear and expreſs Revelation of his Will and Counſel unto Men, and that ſuch a wonderful Record is undoubtedly extant in the World.*

Anſ. That, I. It is not poſſible to believe the *Being of God*, and not alſo the Truth of an eſtabliſhed *Law*, and Rule of Commerce betwixt him and man here, ſo as to know both what we ſhould do, and what we ſhould Expect and Hope from him. II. That this alſo muſt be known and diſplay its Power and Efficacy to the World, in that manner, and by ſuch infallible Evidence of its Truth, as may render all inexcuſable, who give not intire Credit thereto. III. I can be no more clear and aſſured that there

is but one *Sun in the Firmament*, than that there is but one *Fountain*, and *Repoſitory of Sacred Light* about Religion, which is the *Scripture*, and its being the alone publick Standard of truth to the whole World. IV. That no way was ever made known to recover mankind from a ſtate of Bondage, Darkneſs, and Miſery, conſiſtent with the very uſe of reaſon, but by this bleſſed light which ſhineth there. V. Yea that there is as viſible a difference, betwixt the ſame and any pretended Religion which ever was beſides in the World, as there is *betwixt day and night*, which is founded in the immutable nature of theſe things in themſelves. VI. That there is one proper *Sphere*, where this glorious Light of Divine Truth is fixed, and wherein it ſhines forth from one Age to another; which is the Chriſtian Church.

Qu. VI. *But what more peculiar evidences can you ſhew of the* Divinity of the Scriptures, *that all may ſee them to be of infallible truth?*

Anſ. I. That it's ſure ſuch a *book* is this day in the Earth, which no created wiſdom could ever have made, and contains ſuch things of higheſt concern to mankind, as does infinitely exceed the bounds of human ability and invention, and could never have been diſcovered but by God himſelf. II. That it gives forth ſuch exquiſite *laws* and conſtitutions of our religion, as men muſt needs ſee the *holy nature, purity, and perfection of God*, moſt brightly ſhining forth therein. III. Which doth diſcover ſo great and proper a relief for all thoſe evils and miſeries that do attend this fallen eſtate of man, as none but an all-ſufficient God could work. IV. That he alone muſt be the author of this bleſſed record, who

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rules the World, and hath determined the changes and revolutions thereof, when it is not more evident that these visible Heavens are stretched forth over the Earth, than that this *Line of the Scripture is* stretched over the whole Work and *Frame of Providence*, and doth most clearly and brightly *illuminate* the same. V. That surely this was the product of Infinite Wisdom, that so great a variety of matter should meet with so visible a concent and harmony in one perfect and intire frame; yea knit in so close a bond of union together, as makes the whole Bible to be intirely *one piece*; though in the writing of each distinct part thereof it could never have possibly been contrived or foreseen by human wisdom, as we see here, of so admirable an agreement and correspondence, as is in all the parts thereof. VI. That none else could have spoke to the World, in so Majestick a way, and so becoming the greatness and soveraignty of God, to assume such a supremacy, and give forth Laws for absolute obedience from all Mankind thereto, and on such a penalty of eternal destruction; or that any impostors, either possibly could, or durst have, in such a manner, personated the same. VII. That it must needs be his word who perfectly knows what is in man, and hath an absolute authority over the Soul, and is a discerner of the thoughts thereof, who thus not only gives law to the Conscience, and our inward parts, but doth establish an internal Religion there, no less absolutely, than what respects our external work and actions. VIII. Yea where all may see the Penmen thereof under so intire a subjection to the doctrine which they taught, and that it is no contrivance of their own,

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as they did record their own failings, and imperfections, in behalf of the truth; and did thus alſo require all juſt reſpect and obedience to Magiſtrates, when through the whole Earth they were then greateſt Enemies to the Truth of the Goſpel. IX. That this muſt be his Word, who alone can derive principles of life to his own inſtitutions, and animate the ſame with a quickening Spirit; and is a work above the contrivance of Angels or Men, when directed to each new trial of the Church, and perſonal caſe of Chriſtians, as though it had been alone written for that time; ſo that I can be no more perſuaded in reaſon that there is ſuch a Book as the *Bible* in the Earth, than that it came from Heaven, and is the alone rule of Religion, and of Divine Revelation, for the governing of Mankind.

Qu. VII. *How is the ſecure* conveyance of the Scripture *demonſtrable amidſt all the changes of times paſt, and that there could be no poſſible tendency to its corruption*?

Anſw. I. That it's ſo undeniably the firſt rule which ever was given to mankind about Religion, and the alone *publick ſtandard of Truth*, that hath endured the trial and inquiry of all times paſt, ſo as no pretences in the matter of Antiquity could yet ever be to the *contrary*. II. That there is ſo exact an *Harmony* betwixt *the Old and New Teſtament*, as the one is a viſible tranſcript of the other, in its accompliſhment; that I can be no more ſure of ſuch a venerable record as the Old Teſtament, and its unalterable conveyance to the Church, to which the whole race of the Jews is yet a ſtanding witneſs, than how it is continued and perfected in the revelation

lation of the Goſpel, and but one intire frame. III. That its deliverance was by no private deed, but by a publick truſt to the whole Univerſal Church; ſo as it were more eaſie in the way of reaſon to queſtion the moſt fundamental ſtatutes and laws of any Nation, by which mens private right and property is ſecured, than the truth hereof. IV. That under the Goſpel it hath been ſo fully diſperſed over the World, and in ſuch various languages; that an innumerable company of Chriſtians theſe 1600 years paſt, have been as common living Books of the ſame. V. That theſe numerous Verſions and Commentaries written thereon in diverſe Languages, do fully evidence they had the ſame Scripture, and no other than what we have this day. VI. That this was delivered to the Church not only in writing, but in that form of ſound words, for keeping cloſe thereto, as could admit of no poſſible tendency to corrupt or alter the ſame; beſides the continued and publick reference that hath been ſince the firſt Ages of the Goſpel to its deciſion, which all theſe ſharp controverſies, that have been in the Church on all ſides, do inevitably require.

Qu. VIII. *What doth confirm the fall of man, and entry of ſin into the World, this way, from clear and unavoidable evidences of reaſon?*

Anſw. I. That there is ſuch a thing as ſin and evil in the World, with the ſence and conſcience of guilt ariſing hereon, amongſt all mankind, can need no proof nor evidence. II. That it is ſimply impoſſible this ſhould have been originally created with man, or eſſentially belonging to his firſt frame and conſtitution, ſince then there could be no conſcience

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of guilt or remorſe, for what was given to be a part of himſelf, in his firſt frame; nor could it be any ſin, to act thus ſuitably to their own original ſtate. III. That it were not conceiveable alſo how one part of *man* ſhould be in ſuch oppoſition to another. IV. Nor that ſuch a thing as *inherent ſhame* could be in the nature of man, upon the ſence of *guilt*, and by ſo natural a reſult follow the ſame, or that ſuch ſhould be aſhamed of any part of his *own being*, if this were not upon an undoubted *apoſtacy* from what once he was, and that inevitable conviction of Conſcience that he now is what he ought not to be, ſo as the certainty of *Mans Fall* though alone revealed in the Scripture, as to the true cauſe thereof, yet may be as evident to *reaſon*, as the truth of his being now is.

SECTION LI.

Qu. I. *ARE there ſuch* aſſiſtances *to the Chriſtian Faith upon that great and aſtoniſhing myſtery of the Revelation of Chriſt to the World as can fully anſwer the greatneſs thereof from clear and infallible evidence to Mens Judgments?*

Anſw. It is ſure there could nothing poſſibly be deſired more to ſatisfie the moſt doubtful and ſuſpicious mind than is given for the furtheſt certainty hereof. I. That ſuch *a glorious perſon* as the *Meſſiah* was to come, and be *anointed* to that great work of *redeeming mankind* from ſin and miſery, and bring man back again unto God; and that this *promiſe* is the alone foundation, whereon the *church* was founded ſince man fell. II. That all the numerous *types and ſacrifices* under the *Law*, did ſo expreſly tend to confirm their Faith of that

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one bleſſed *Propitiatory Sacrifice* which was to be offered up. III. That long ere the *New Teſtament* was written, there was ſo clear and exact a protraicture of the *Meſſias* drawn forth in the *Old*, with ſuch peculiar marks whereby he ſhould be known to the *church*, and infallibly take place in the event, as men could not upon any *Scripture evidence* expect his coming in another way. IV. That his *humiliation and ſufferings* were ſo expreſly held forth and foretold, with the peculiar circumſtances thereof, in the 53. *chap. of Iſaiah, and* 9. *of Daniel*, as if they had been Eye witneſſes of the accompliſhment thereof. V. That even the ſpecial *ſeaſon* and period of time for accompliſhing this *great promiſe* was ſo far made known, as upon diligent ſearch and inquiry, its near approach might be diſcernable and clear to *what, or what manner of time* this did ſpecially relate; for which both the *Fall of the Monarchies*, and *Daniels ſeventy weeks* were ſet up as High-way marks to guide mens Faith herein. VI. That it's ſimply impoſſible according to the Scripture, how the promiſed *Meſſias* could be yet to come, except the *Jews* were put in the ſame ſtate they were in at his coming, when now for theſe 1600. Years there hath been no *Scepter*, nor *Lawgiver*, no *Temple*, or *daily Sacrifice*. VII: That this great myſtery could never poſſibly have entred in our thoughts, or be deviſed by any created underſtanding.

Qu. II. *But are there as clear and infallible evidences of the truth of this great promiſe in the event, that ſurely the bleſſed* Meſſias *of the World is now come, as that it is ſure he was promiſed?*

Anſw.

Answ. It's beyond all possible debate, I. That so *Divine and Wonderful a Person* was in the days of *Tiberius Cæsar* manifested to *Israel*, with no outward shew or observation; who did so great and marvellous things, before all the people, as were above all created power, yea, that he was *Crucified at Jerusalem*, under *Pontius Pilate*, is a truth in the matter of fact, that both Jews and Heathens have been enforced to confess it. II. That this special season of his coming into the World is the *great Epocha* and period of time from which the *Christian Church*, hath ever since to this day reckoned her state and succession, is undoubted and clear also. III. That the time of his appearance unto the World, did so exactly suit that which was foretold by the *Prophets*, that the *Jewish Church* was at that time with greatest intentness looking after the *Messias*; so as some remarkable *Impostors* took occasion from hence to deceive the People herein. IV. That in him who was then revealed, and whom the Christian Church *worships*, it's sure, was most exactly fulfilled, what ever was foretold, concerning the Messias in the Old Testament; and we do appeal herein to these *Records* which all the *Jews* even to this day do acknowledge to be Divine. V. That this was not done in a corner, but in the publick view of men in those days, most known to all and famous; yea by the special appointment of God at so solemn a time of the *Passover in Jerusalem*, where *Christ our Passover was then Sacrificed*. VI. That no humane interest or policy could possibly be in this discovery of the *Gospel*; when nothing could have been more visibly cross thereto or obstructive of its success, than such a publishing of the *death and*

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ſufferings of our Lord, with all the ignominy and abaſement which attended the ſame, had there been any way here to conſult Carnal Reaſon, or any other ground to bear it out than the evidence and certainty of its truth. VII. That herein have all divided parties *and ſects* in the Chriſtian World been enforced ſtill to meet and conſent, in an acknowledgement of the ſubſtance thereof. VIII. That in the ſame light which was held forth in the Old Teſtament about the *Meſſias*, did the whole *Gentile Church* enter; and made claim to their right for being adopted the Seed and Children of *Abraham*, on theſe clear and expreſs Promiſes given for the ſame; which the Jews could not but confeſs to be of Divine Authority.

Qu. III. *What confirmation is it to the Chriſtian Faith, that the coming of the Meſſias ſhould be deferred for* 4000. *Years after the Promiſe?*

Anſw. Though the ſoveraign pleaſure of *God* ſhould ſilence and ſatisfie our mind herein; yet is there ſuch a ſight to be had hereof, and of infinite Divine Wiſdom ſhining forth in the ſame as ſhould be moſt *confirming* for theſe *ends*. I. That there might be a more diſtinct repreſenting of the *glory of this Myſtery* to Angels and Men, in ſuch *a gradual* opening up of the ſame. II. To put that weight and high value on his own *Promiſe and Teſtimony* herein, when on the alone credit thereof, he would thus both try, and bear out the *Faith of his Church*, for ſo many *Ages*, and draw forth their deſires and longings in all that long ſpace of time after the ſame. III. To teſtifie the greatneſs of his wrath againſt *Sin* and the *Apoſtacy of mankind*, by ſuffering the generality thereof to lye ſo long

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under its *fatal* effects. IV. To prepare the *Church* for ſo *great a reception*, by all that long *preparatory ſervice of legal inſtitutions*, it highly becoming the greatneſs of this *myſtery*, to have ſo ſolemn and wondrous an introduction thereto. V. That thus the World might have its full trial of the inſufficiency of natural abilities, and of any improvements of humane Wiſdom and Learning, for help; after this had firſt been at the furtheſt height both in *Greece and Rome*, before the alone *Redeemer* of the Church came.

Qu. IV. *What can offer furtheſt conviction to the World, of the Truth of Chriſtianity from its nature and internal excellencies; and that it is no leſs eſſentially good in its ſelf, than evidently true?*

Anſw. I. It is undeniable even to thoſe that live at a diſtance, that ſuch is the *truth of Chriſt*, that though all viſible and humane props ſhould fail, it can ſubſiſt by its *own evidence, and authority* over Mens Conſciences; and hath thus ever preſerved its ſtation in the worſt of times. II. That as it holds forth the moſt exquiſite *rule of perfection* to follow, ſo doth it bring the greateſt relief to the diſtempers of the mind, and thoſe miſeries which attend the humane ſtate here; ſo that a higher glory doth thus reſult to the *Holy God*, by this *diſpenſation of Grace* to fallen Man than if he had ſtood in his *Primitive ſtate*. III. That it is ſure the Truth and Doctrine of Chriſt doth natively tend to fix men in a *ſtate of light and Communion with God*, and in a *State of Separation* in their *Principles*, *Affection*, and *Converſation* from the World. IV. That it doth more brightly ſhine forth in *ſimplicity, and truth and in its inter-*

nal and vital acts, than in any outward form or ſhow: Yea in the way of *ſelf-denial*, *meekneſs*, and *poverty of ſpirit*, doth ſuch an excellency appear, as in *its own nature*, hath as viſible a difference from the proud and vindictive ſpirit of this World, as the *day* hath from the *night*. V. That ſuch *Chriſtianity*, can be known, by no naked *doctrinal* diſcovery of the ſame to mens judgment, or ſuch rules as any humane ſcience is acquired by, without an inward power, and principles of a *new life*; nor can there ever be a right knowledge of *Divinity*, until it be firſt ingrafted in a *Divine Heart*. So far is this *myſtery* above all humane rule, and contrivance. VI. That it is ſtated in the greateſt oppoſition to any falſe ſhow or *hypocriſy*; yea, brings ſuch inforcements therewith of candor, and truth, and of *love*, *tenderneſs and ſympathy* towards others, as all muſt ſee is not only the higheſt ornament and perfection of our nature, but the greateſt *bleſſing to the World* that ever was known. VII. That ſuch a native *luſtre and fragrancy* doth attend the truth, and ſimplicity of the Goſpel, as makes it no more poſſible for humane *art* or cunning to repreſent this, than to make the dead image of a *man* to live, or to paint on a board the *vital ſcent* of a Violet or Roſe, to our *Senſes*. VIII. That in this way of the *Goſpels* ſubduing Men to the Obedience thereof, by the power of *inward Grace*, the *Glory of Chriſt* doth more eminently ſhine forth, than if he had appeared for this end with the greateſt outward majeſty and attendance of Angels to our Bodily Eyes. IX. That it is viſible that the whole World beſides, that is without the revelation of *Chriſt*, is a place where horrour, falſehood, and impiety do manifeſtly reign,

Qu. V. *But how do you receive ſo wonderfull a truth, as that of the Goſpel is, when it's now ſo great a diſtance of time from its firſt promulgation.*

Anſ. I. That we can be no more ſure and perſwaded of the moſt viſible and preſent objects of ſenſe, than, that this is the ſame Goſpel which is ſtill ſhining forth to the world, whereby an innumerable company of all nations, tongues and languages, have received the ſpirit, and been ſealed; yea, it hath made that change upon men, in turning them from ungodlineſs and idols to ſerve the living God, as hath been no leſs marvellous than the turning of ſo many wolves into lambs. II. That it is the ſame goſpel which not only through a ſeries of 1600 years hath been atteſted, but by ſuch innumerable *witneſſes* who counted not their life dear unto the death for ſealing thereof, and found it ſweet to be offered up in the Flames for *Chriſt*. III. Which in all Ages paſt hath ſtood out the greateſt oppoſition that ever the World made to any intereſt, while the *weapons of its Warfare were Spiritual, and not Carnal*; and with that ſucceſs that made the time of the *Churches hotteſt Perſecution* from Heathens the time alſo of its moſt remarkable ſpreading in the World. IV. That the ſame *Goſpel* is revealed this day, which hath had ſuch diſcernible *triumphs* and ſucceſs when no external aſſiſtance could be had for it; and there was no viſible power by which it gained the moſt ſavage and dark parts of the Earth to take on the *Yoak of Chriſt*, and prefer the objects of Faith to the moſt deſireable *objects of Senſe*. V. Yea, the Goſpel hath not only had ſuch *vital influence* on Mens Heart and practice, to change it into the ſame *Image*; but that herein the doctrine of the

Croſs of Chriſt in the greateſt *ſimplicity* hath ſtill been the moſt effectual way of its conqueſt, and the greateſt attractive on Mens Souls to receive the ſame.

Qu. VI. *How is it demonſtrable that ſuch remarkable ſufferings of times paſt for the truth of Chriſt, were both founded on the alone certainty thereof, and carried out by a Divine Spirit above any aſſiſtance of Nature?*

Anſw. That it is ſure, I. Here was no *Comedy*, Play, or Perſonated ſufferings which the *Primitive Chriſtians*, then and in after times, did endure for *Chriſt*; or that theſe unexpreſſible torments and pains were any *Dream*, and *Deluſion* either to themſelves or the World, and that their adverſaries did thus conflict and wreſtle with their own *ſhadow* in ſo continued and cruel an oppoſition. II. That the *Joy and Exultation of Spirit* theſe Witneſſes had amidſt their *Torments*, (who otherwiſe wanted no ſenſe or feeling of their Pains and Sufferings,) could have no riſe but what was ſupernatural. III. That this could be no poſſible diſſimulation or *counterfeit* when they were ſtepping into *Eternity*, nor the product of a diſtempered judgment; whilſt all might ſee what ſeriouſneſs of Spirit, *Tenderneſs, and Bowels of Compaſſion* to their Adverſaries they did then evidence. IV. That thoſe greateſt ſufferings were upon choice, and Chriſtians haſtned to endure them rather than to be ſafe at the rate of receding and departing in any thing from the Truth. V. Yea no natural Reaſon can comprehend how ſuch mean and feeble perſons as many of theſe were, ſhould endure, what would have made the greateſt *natural Courage* to faint, as if they had foregone all Humane Paſſions which

which Fleſh and Blood muſt needs have herein; ſo that I am conſtrain'd to ſee ſomething no leſs marvellous and ſupernatural in the *Faith of Martyrs*, than in the *Faith of Miracles*.

SECTION III.

Qu. I. *IS it fully demonſtrable, that the* Faith of a Deity, *and of ſuch an eſtabliſhment as a religious worſhip, muſt neceſſarily determine Men, and conſtrain them to be* Chriſtians, *on this ground that they cannot but ſee how* Religion *hath not another Being in the Earth, but in the Truth of* Chriſtianity?

Anſw. It is ſimply impoſſible to make a rational trial herein, and not ſee the certainty of this demonſtration, to be thus clear. I. That there needs no more for any of a ſerious ſpirit, but to come and ſee, what the whole frame of *Heatheniſm* was, and if it be poſſible to deny, (even under any ſenſe of the law and dictates of Nature,) its being the higheſt reproach of Mankind; and that the very *myſteries* of that *Heatheniſh worſhip*, were ſo horrid and impure, as they needed a Vail from the common view of the World. II. Nor can there be a rational reflection this day, on that ſtrange Monſter of *Mahumetaniſm*, but as of a viſible *Prodigy* of the Judgment of God, on theſe parts of the Earth; upon their Apoſtacy from the *Chriſtian Faith*, by giving men up to ſuch an Impoſture, as expoſeth the very name and form of Religion to deriſion; and can never claim a reception either from the purity of its rule or internal evidence of the truth thereof, or of its having any poſſible conſiſtence with it ſelf. III. That

it's ſure alſo that the *Jewiſh Religion* had never another Being but in the Truth and Faith of *Chriſtianity*, and where this Foundation is divided from, it hath none at all; yea that that People unto this day are ſuch a Confirming Witneſs to the Chriſtian Religion, as it's ſtrange this doth not beget deeper Impreſſions on Mens Spirits. So that there is an abſolute neceſsity, we muſt either forego the uſe of Reaſon, or ſee, if there be not ſuch a Rule given and Revealed for Commerce betwixt God and Man, as the *Scripture*, (where the Laws and Conſtitutions of the *Chriſtian Faith*, are for this end held forth,) that it's then ſure there is no ſuch thing, as any Religion in the Earth, but what were ſo highly irrational and abſurd, as ſhould rather juſtifie *Atheiſm*.

Q. II. *What ſpecial Confirmation to* Chriſtianity, *can this Viſible State of the* Jews *bear, who are in ſo expreſs an Oppoſition to the Goſpel of Chriſt?*

Anſ. If this were brought near our thoughts we ſhould find it one of the great Aſſiſtances to our *Faith*. I. That it's ſure there is ſuch a People and Race, as a Living and Viſible Evidence to our Senſe, of the Truth of that renowned *Nation, and Church of Iſrael*, to which the *Oracles of God* were committed; and thus is ſtill, as ſome part of the evident ruines of that once flouriſhing State. II. That the World may ſee, ſuch a People kept by themſelves and not mixed with the Nations, whoſe Fathers from one Generation to another did ſtill own the *Divinity of the Old Teſtament*; and doth atteſt that Doctrine, in which the Truth and Subſtance of *Chriſtianity* lies, even whilſt with greateſt malice they oppoſe the Chriſtian Faith, to witneſs that there can be no

poſsible

poſsible Colluſion and Deceit here. III. Their being under a ſtroak of that *Judicial* Induration and Blindneſs of Mind, as no Reaſon could poſsibly comprehend ſuch a thing, how they ſhould not ſee the Light in the very Noon-day of the Goſpel, if we were not expreſly foretold that they ſhould be concluded under ſuch an Arreſt of Judgment, until the *Fulneſs of the Gentiles* be brought in. IV. That ſo immediate an appearance of God, is in the *Judgement* of that People, both in the manner and continuance thereof, as no inſtance could ever be found to reſemble the ſame, ſince man was formed in the Earth; and is as a Conſpicuous Monument of Divine Wrath, ſet up for every Age and Time of the Church, to turn aſide and conſider this great ſight, and inquire what means ſo ſtrange and amazing a thing, as the *State* of the *ſcattered Jews* is, now under the Times of the Goſpel. V. That this Deſolation on them and ſtroak, had ſuch ſpecial concurring circumſtances for giving Light thereto; as being not above forty eight *years*, *after the Death of Chriſt*, with their hands, as it were, hot and reaking with that *Blood* which they had wiſhed on them and their Children; that it ſhould be at that time of the *Paſſover*, which was the very ſame of the *Sufferings of our bleſſed Lord* there, and pointing as with the *finger* at the ſame; as alſo by the *Romans*, whoſe Intereſt in their Oppoſition to Chriſt they pretended to own.

Qu. III. *Is the* way and manner *of the* Goſpels Promulgation *ſuch, as no other Profeſſion could ever pretend to, and where all may ſee there can be no human Intereſt or Contrivance in the ſame?*

Anſ. It is undeniable, that no Intereſt elſe was

ever in ſuch a way promoted, and it does exceed all natural underſtanding, how the Truth of Chriſtianity could in this manner prevail, I. To perſwade men without any *Motives*, or Inducements from this preſent World, to imbrace a Doctrine ſo wholly repugnant to Nature; yea to prefer an Intereſt of things *not ſeen*, and which none ever in the Earth ſaw, to the moſt deſirable *Objects of Senſe*. II. To admit no *implicite Reception* from any, but on their exacteſt Inquiry and Tryal herein; or in another way claim an Intereſt in Mens Affections, but by a full Aſſent of their Light and Judgment to the ſame. III. To admit no Gratification to the moſt Predominant Deſires and Inclinations of Men towards any Darling Sin; which according to human Wiſdom would be judged of an abſolute neceſſity for gaining any Acceptance with ſuch; yea to give no partial reſpect to the greateſt *Princes* more than to the meaneſt. IV. To purſue its Intereſt, by ſo plain a Diſcovery of the *Death, and Sufferings of our Bleſſed Lord, with the whole Ignominy thereof*, when nothing could more evidently controul ſuch an end by any Rules of human Wiſdom and Policy, if there had been conſulting with Fleſh and Blood herein. V. And it's ſure there could be no deſign, without an immediate Divine Power, in ſuch a manner to plead the Intereſt of Chriſtianity with men, by inſerting Affliction, and the *Croſs* in the firſt entry, as *Eſſential to the Profeſſion thereof*, and holding forth the Neceſſity of taking on the *Yoke of Chriſt*, without which none can be his *Diſciples*.

Qu. IV. *But wherein doth the Evidence of that great Demonſtration of the Goſpel moſt clearly appear,*

in

in the Love and Unity of Chriſtians *amongſt themſelves, which we find Chriſt doth ſo ſpecially preſs, for this end, that the World might know, and have ſuch a Viſible Seal of his* Divine Miſſion? *Joh.* 17. 21.

Anſ. The greatneſs of this Demonſtration may be thus evident to all. I. That it's ſo clearly demonſtrative of the *Purity of our Religion*, which can admit of no Bitterneſs, Strife, Recrimination, or ſuch Indecencies of Heat and Paſſion, which are the fatal Effects of Diſcord in the Church; and thus lets us ſee the Excellency of the *Spirit and Rule* of the Goſpel. II. That thus alſo we may know the Power and Efficacy of the Truth thereof, *which is according to Godlineſs*, upon Mens Hearts, in ſubduing theſe Diſtempers of the Mind and Judgment. III. That this doth ſo ſpecially tend to make Religion *Lovely*, and to draw forth matter of Praiſe and Bleſſing to God from the World, when they ſee ſuch a Native Effect of Chriſtianity as this, to make thoſe who profeſs the ſame in that manner ſhine forth in *Tenderneſs, Humility, and Brotherly Love*, ſo that they become as a Publick Good and Bleſsing to Mankind in the places they are in. IV. This appears alſo from the Nature of that *Union in the Church of Chriſt*, and amongſt his Followers, which only a Divine Power could both Frame and make Effectual; and it's ſure that no Humane Society or Conſtitution could ever claim ſuch an *Unity* therein as this is; where not only Perſons of all Nations and Languages, and of all Conditions, both high and low, but of the moſt different Intereſts, Humours, and dividing Circumſtances in other things, do yet in ſo marvellous an *Harmony* meet in the *Body of Chriſt which is his Church*

here

here in the Earth. V. Becauſe herein alſo doth the Glory and Honour of our *Bleſſed Head*, more eminently appear in ſecuring this *Unity* of his Church, under a *Diverſity of Light* and Judgment otherways, by a Spirit of Love, Meekneſs and Condeſcendence amongſt his People; than by impoſing the moſt ſevere and abſolute Uniformity in all things, to be the alone Condition of *Chriſtian Communion*.

Qu. V. *But what ſtrength and evidence doth this* Demonſtration *of the Goſpel, now bear in ſo* divided a State *of Religion, and when the wounds and breaches of the Church this day are like to bleed unto Death?*

Anſ. Whatever juſt cauſe be of grief, yet is there none for darkning the Truth of this *Demonſtration*, on theſe grounds. I. That none can deny the Perfection of the *Rule* of the Goſpel, for there is a moſt firm and intire Unity amongſt all the Followers of Chriſt on the Earth II. That no Oppoſition is made thereto, but what hath been *foretold* as one of the greateſt Tryals of the Church under the *New Teſtament*, and the Spirit of God doth moſt expreſly point at in theſe *latter times*. III. Becauſe the furtheſt *Oppoſition* thereto can be no more cauſe for any to ſtumble, or queſtion the Truth of this *Demonſtration*, than whether there is a *Devil*, whoſe greateſt deſign hath ever been to divide and break Chriſtians amongſt themſelves. IV. Becauſe this *Union*, which is chiefly *Myſtical and Inviſible*, is much greater often, than what this way may appear to the World, and of that kind as is not interrupted by diſtance of place, or any want of Local Communion. V. That ſuch a *guard* is ſet by the Lord unto this piece of his Glory, to oppoſe any Invaſion

vaſion thereon, that there ſtands an *Angel with a flaming Sword,* upon every hand in the *Commands* and *Threatnings* of the Goſpel, to ſecure this Bleſſed *Unity* of the Saints amongſt themſelves, ſo as none can invade the ſame but on their higheſt Peril, of oppoſing that which is as the *Apple of Chriſts eye.* VI. That it's ever found that this Demonſtration hath ſome clear Evidence amongſt ſuch who are indeed the *Diſciples of Chriſt,* and according to their advance in the Life and Power of Chriſtianity doth the more brightly ſhine forth; ſo that the nearer the *Lines* are to the *Centre,* the nearer alſo are they amongſt themſelves. VII. That in all times there hath been ſome tremendous *mark* of the Judgment of God made viſible on ſuch who are *Contentious,* and have made it their work to *Cauſe Diviſion* in the Church and ſow diſcord among Brethren.

Qu. VI. *But what hath the Church now in theſe latter days to Compenſate, and make up the want of that great Demonſtration by* Miracles, *and ſuch extraordinary Confirmations of the Chriſtian Faith, as were in the firſt times?*

Anſ. I. We may hereby ſee that the *Seal of Martyrdom,* which came in the room of *Miracles* to the Church, hath exceeded that which was in the firſt times of the Goſpel. II. That there have been ſince ſuch innumerable *ſhining Examples of Holineſs,* yea theſe continued to this day, whom the World might ſee did walk in the Light and Power of Chriſtianity, as ſure as men walk, under the Power and Vertue of a living Soul. III. That we now ſee what a length the *Courſe* of the Goſpel and of the Church Militant is come, and how far thus the *Times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,* which once

was

was so contrary to all human Appearance. IV. That so sure and exact a *Performance of the Scripture*, is now undeniable in the event, and of such great and marvellous things which were foretold under the *New Testament*, that in an ordinary way none could have believed, what we see with our Eyes; and now have these things, which were in former Ages the *Object of the Churches Faith*, been made the *Object of our Sense*; and it's sure this is such *a Seal* and Confirmation to our Faith in these last times as doth much exceed the greatest *Miracles* which were in the *first Planting of the Gospel*. V. Though we may not resolve our Faith on any *Extraordinary Providences*, or lay the least weight hereon to support the Authority of the Doctrine we profess, (since this only is founded on that Sacred Revelation of *Divine Truth in the Scripture*, which is the infallible Rule to discern true Miracles, and what is Gods Seal herein under the undoubted Signature and Stamp of his own Power and working in the same;) yet hath there been such incontroulable evidence of extraordinary Signs and Confirmations to confirm the Truth of the Reformed Religion, since the Reformation, as in no Ages past was ever known, but with the first planting of the Gospel among the *Gentiles*.

SECTION IV.

Qu. I. *IS it clear and demonstrable that the* Doctrine of Christ, *is a* Soul-Quickning *and* Experimental Religion, *and the Trial thereof, in its most Supernatural Truths, of such rational Certainty and Evidence, that the World can no more deny*

or

or queſtion the ſame than thoſe Experiments of Nature, *that are of moſt univerſal Uſe?*

Anſ. Though men looked but at a diſtance here or were come from *Heatheniſm*, ſo far as to make a Serious Trial of *Chriſtianity*, it's ſure they could not but ſee, and be fully perſwaded in their Judgment hereof on theſe grounds. I. That a diſcovery is undoubted and clear in the *Scripture* of ſo great things, as, that there is a *Holy Ghoſt*, and there be his workings on Mens Souls, of *Peace with God*, and the *Joy of his Preſence*, which all who receive the Goſpel are called to know and prove on their own Trial. II. That this witneſs of Chriſtian *Experience*, hath as diſcernable a Conſent and Harmony therewith as Face anſwereth to Face in the Glaſs, and is clear to be no *Caſual Thing*, but every ſtep in this way of *Trial*, is by *Scripture Light*, and what Chriſtians did before read there, they know it now by Feelings on their own Souls. III. That this in all Ages of the *Church* and where-ever ſuch as ſerved God in the Spirit were found in the moſt *remote parts* from others, hath ſtill been the ſame; and like *a great Roll* is ſent down from one Generation to another, with their *Confirmatory Seal, that God is faithful and true*, in thoſe Truths of his Word which ſeem moſt incredible to the World, and now come to our hand to require the ſame Atteſtation and Witneſs. IV. That they who know and teſtifie theſe things, ſometimes found it not eaſie to believe the ſame, and did no leſs judge of ſuch *great Experiments of Religion* as a Dream or imaginary thing than moſt now do, until they knew them by Experience on their Soul. V. That ſuch alſo have been the moſt *Burning and Shining Lights* that ever were in the

the Church, and theſe innumerable in all Ages declare the ſame; and that in the Mouth of the Grave and entrance to an Eternal State when no outward Intereſt could ſway them hereto. VI. That it muſt be a matter of greateſt Aſſurance which hath then preſſed the moſt tender *Parents* with their laſt and dying Breath to commend the ſame *Trial to their Children*, and to charge their being earneſt herein as the greateſt Intereſt they could leave them. VII. That what ever *Differences* be oft among theſe in ſome matters of Truth: Yet, in the Certainty of this great Trial of the Life, Power and Comforts of Religion, there is an *Harmonious Oneneſs* in the ſame Teſtimony in all Times of the Church. VIII. That if any queſtion this, becauſe ſo remote from Mens *Senſes*, and the Judgment of Carnal Reaſon; the reality of its *Effects*, doth unanſwerably prove both the *Reality* and *Excellency of the Cauſe*.

Qu. II. *What clear and Rational Conviction can you offer, of ſo great a thing as* Converſion *of men from a State of Nature, to a* new ſtate by Grace, *which doth raiſe them as far above the reſidue of Mankind, as Reaſon doth above the ſtate of the Beaſts?*

Anſ. Though I ſhould ſtrive againſt the Conviction of ſuch a *Miracle*, and Demonſtration of the Goſpel, as *Converſion* is, yet were it not poſſible to deny ſuch demonſtrative Evidences as the World hath hereof. I. That it is ſure ſuch a *Change* is made eſſentially requiſite to the *Being*, and Conſtitution of a Chriſtian, by the whole Conſent of the Scripture. II. That there was never yet an *Argument in Nature*, for ones being a Chriſtian

ſtian in the Life and Power thereof: what ever may be for a naked form or ſhow. III. That they are not a *few*, but innumerable Inſtances in all times and of all Ranks and Conditions of Men on whom ſo great a *Change* and difference hath been made thus evident, both from themſelves what once they were, and from the reſidue of the World. IV. That this hath been not only upon ſuch as have been *ſignally Impious* in their Practice, but who in their Judgment were wont to deride Holineſs as a Fancy; ſo as *Atheiſts* muſt grant that there have been as profeſt *Atheiſts* ſometimes as themſelves, who have been made ſuch Conſpicuous Monuments of the Power of the Goſpel. V. That none can Object here, as once the *Jews* did, Do any of the *Rulers*, or ſuch as the World counts moſt *wiſe*, and knowing ſtand witneſſes to the ſame; when it is ſo known that there have not been more *Wiſe*, *Learned*, and *Judicious* in the Things of Reaſon upon the Earth, than ſuch as have been eminent Examples of the Power of Converſion? VI. That its marvellous *Effects* in ſubduing men, from what once was their Predominant Intereſt and Idol, and to part from what had been as their *right Eye*, *or Hand* could only be from an Immediate Divine Power. VII. That ſuch as were greateſt Adverſaries to the Truth, have been made no leſs eminent *Inſtruments* in the Service of Chriſt, and choice Veſſels of Honour, than once they were in their Enmity and Oppoſition. VIII. That this Change hath been diſcernable in times of moſt Viſible Perſecutions and Hazard, when no outward Advantage or Gain could have the leaſt influence thereon. Now as theſe are demonſtrably clear, ſo can there be no poſſible ground

to

to question this. I. That the *Scripture* is faithfull and true in so great a discovery. II. That there is a *Divine Spirit* and a Power above nature, which accompanies the same in such a change. III. That there are surely, *contrary states in another World*, when they are so undeniably manifest here.

Qu. III. *But can so great an experiment of Religion as that of* Communion betwixt God and Men, *here upon Earth be made rationally convincing to such as are themselves strangers thereto; and for a further confirming of the Christian Faith?*

Answ. Though this be an *experiment* of Divine Truth of a more transcendent interest and value than all that ever were in Nature, yet it is no less *evident*, and there can be no possible delusion herein; if I. It's that to which so *innumerable a Company* bears Testimony and hath sent down the same, as that which not once or twice they have approved but in the continued trial of their Life. II. That it's known to the World, that such as testifie what they do, and have so oft found in the retirement of their Souls with God, are of as *discerning Spirits* to know the true value of things, as any else; yea such whose testimony in other things the worst of men could not refuse nor deny. III. That it's undeniably evident, such must have another acquaintance and *society than that of men*; which not only makes these hidden exercises of godliness so desireable, (where all may see they more flee than follow any humane Witness,) but also makes so visible a change both in their case and countenance after most sad anguish and down-castings of Spirit. IV. That it is so evident also how such as are most serious

ſerious this way, have been viſibly oft raiſed above their ordinary caſe, and frame in Prayer, and other duties of Religion; yea, in that manner, as they who never knew there is a *Holy Ghoſt* but by report, could not withſtand ſo clear conviction of the reality hereof, that can beget ſuch *liberty*, *humble tenderneſs* and melting of Heart, yea ſuch diſcernable joy and confidence: V. That no deluſion or falſe ſhew can be here, when it's ever ſeen, that ſuch as are moſt ſerious and frequent in *Prayer* and theſe hid retirements with God, are the moſt flouriſhing alſo in the *vitals* of Chriſtianity, and have the moſt honourable luſtre, and appearance of any in their profeſſion. VI. That it's ſuch only whoſe joy and comfort is moſt ſpecially diſcernable beyond others, when theſe lower ſprings of outward help and encouragement are moſt viſibly ſhut up.

Qu. IV. *Is that great, and experimental part of Religion in the* Power of the Conſcience *over man, ſuch as may be as demonſtrable to the World, as the truth of a rational Being?*

Anſw. It may be matter of wonder that men are not ſtruck with deeper convictions hereon, when they cannot but ſee. I. That though this be the greateſt *tormentor*, and troubler of the World, yet is there no poſſible retreat from its power, tho' men ſhould flee to the uttermoſt parts of the Earth, but doth it enforce the Soul to a *reflexion on its ſelf*, even when it trembleth at that ſight. II. That it cauſeth great fear and horrour upon the commitment of *ſecret ſins*, when no dread of Humane Witneſs, or of viſible hazard this way could occaſion it. III. That it admits no violence in any to out-dare the ſame, but is a power that the *great-*

eſt *Monarchs* find to be ſtronger than they; and is ſuch, that theſe oft are enforced for preſent eaſe, and relief either to divert, or bribe the ſame by ſome falſe grounds of peace. IV. That it conſtrains men to *Juſtifie God*, and *Judge themſelves*, (when his hand doth purſue them,) and to find out their ſin, and guilt, which was before hid. V. That it makes men alſo afraid to be *alone* with themſelves; and to tremble at the Word of Truth, becauſe its *light doth torment them*, by that unavoidable application which Conſcience makes hereof. VI. Yea it makes mens guilt ſo legible oft in their countenance, (even when they ſtudy moſt to conceal it,) that all may ſee there is an accuſer within, whoſe Authority and Power cannot poſſibly be declined. VII. That with ſo remarkable a *confidence* and *ſecurity*, it doth ſupport Mens Spirit, and makes it eaſie to ſuſtain its greateſt infirmities from without, when it is a Friend; yea, and upholds the oppreſt with unſpeakable Peace and Comfort, when it doth oft cauſe the oppreſſour to tremble.

Qu. V. *But what doth moſt neceſſarily reſult from ſo clear a demonſtration as the* Conſcience *is, for confirming of our Faith?*

Anſw. I. That it's infallibly thus clear, that there is a *Higher Power* and *Judgment*, to which all mankind is ſubjected, and gives the World an unavoidable demonſtration, both of the being of *God*, and of the *Truth of his Word*, in the great and ſupernatural diſcovery which it makes hereof. II. That there is a Supream and Infallible Law alſo and Inviſible Judge above us, under whoſe power and authority this *Court of Juſtice* doth (without reſpect of Perſons) both *Summon*, *Arreſt*, bring in *Witneſs*

and

and *Sentence* great and ſmall. III. That the *Internal Government* of our *Bleſſed Lord*, this way (both in the ſeverity of his rebukes and moſt ſenſible enlargements of Peace and Comfort) is unavoidably demonſtrated. IV. That it bears ſo clear evidence to unknown and undoubted *relief*, and none elſe could be ever found, for theſe Wounds and Stings of the Conſcience, but in the *Light and Power of Chriſtianity*. V. That it is ſimply impoſſible for men to delight freely in a courſe of ſin, when no Humane Power can diſarm the Conſcience of that ſo intolerable *a ſting*, by which it begins ſo early a Hell within the Soul. VI. That ſuch is the Power and Peace of a good Conſcience, as can make it ſtand unbroken amidſt the greateſt ruins and terrours of the World, when under ſuch a guard as that of its own *innocency*.

SECTION V.

Qu. I. *IS the evidence of a* Kingdom of Darkneſs, *in a direct oppoſition and contrariety to that Kingdom of Light, which Chriſt hath ſet up by the Goſpel, ſuch as the certainty thereof may be a matter of Senſe, as well as of Faith*?

Anſw. This is of ſuch ſpecial uſe, both to confirm the Chriſtian Faith, and awake ſuch to deeper reflexion on the ſame, with whom there ſeems no hope to prevail, but by *proofs* from *palpable experience*; and it is not poſſible to deny. I. That there is ſuch a power, as the *Devil* and thoſe *wicked Spirits* incompaſſing the Earth, yea that they have an ordinary and familiar converſe with many therein. II. That theſe Spirits (though once originally excellent,) have fallen into ſuch an Apoſtacy, as all

may ſee their aim and only pleaſure, is to *diſhonour God*, and deſtroy his *Image* in Man. III. That it is impoſſible to deny the *marks* of that Power and Conqueſt, which the *Prince of this World* hath every where amongſt men; yea how viſibly many are transformed into his Image by ſuch prodigious and deſperate acts of wickedneſs, as we ſhould think humane nature could not but tremble at. IV. That none can queſtion the certainty both of *Senſe* and *Reaſon* which is in the truth of *Apparitions* and *Bodily Poſſeſſions* of Men in all Ages, and in all places of the Earth; and can need no demonſtration for this, that in many places of the Earth, the *Devil* is both viſibly and audibly known. V. That he is ſo manifeſt in his appearance as a *Spirit of Blaſphemy*, which impetuouſly acts Men to War againſt Heaven with their *Tongue* in ſuch Oaths and Curſing as have no ſenſual pleaſure, or gain herein; yea, as a *Spirit of Deluſion* in ſo viſible an excitement of others to ſuch extravagancies (under a ſhew of Religion,) as are inconſiſtent with any uſe of Judgment or Reaſon. VI. That ſo innumerable a company of humane Race, hath in all Ages been in a *formal*, and *expreſs Covenant* with theſe powers of darkneſs is undeniable, upon the moſt ſevere and impartial inquiry herein.

Qu. II. *What ſpecial* aſſiſtance *to your Faith doth the certainty of theſe* Powers *of* Darkneſs *bring therewith?*

Anſw. I. It is plain that ſuch a Party both in their Nature and continued Actings, are in a ſtated oppoſition to the Kingdom of Chriſt. II. It is viſible, that the *Prey* which theſe Mighty Hunters do follow after, is not our *Body*, or the things of this Life,

Life, but it is the *Immortal Soul*, and *Future State*, that Man might be made ſharer of the ſame Miſery under which they are concluded. III. All may ſee their being under reſtraint of a Supream Power above them, and under ſuch *Chains* as do irreſiſtibly bound their *rage* and *enmity* againſt Man, by an *inviſible Guard* and *Hedge* which they cannot break over. IV. Their greateſt rage, and ſtrugling is againſt the *Converſion* of ſinners to God, and to hold faſt his poſſeſſion in ſuch, as the *Spirit of God* doth not more clearly move for their reſcue, than theſe do to croſs that bleſſed deſign of the Goſpel. V. There are none that are ſerious in the Truth and Life of Religion but find themſelves purſued by ſuch an *Adverſary*; and have as diſcernably another Party than themſelves, or the World to conflict with, as if they ſaw them in *a viſible ſhape*. VI. That by the *Goſpel* and within the Precinct of the Church, there is diſcernably a much greater *reſtraint of Satans Dominion* and Power than in all the Earth beſides; yea that the advantage of being within the *external covenant of Baptiſm*, is ſo demonſtrable that the leaſt yielding or tendency to a renouncing of the ſame, (or any Acts of *Homage*,) for making uſe of his help, hath ever made way for ſome more extraordinary Power of the *Devil* over ſuch than others. VII. Thus is a moſt undeniable Confirmation given of an *Inviſible World*, and of ſuch *intellectual Beings* there, as are far above man; yea and it is plain that there is an intercourſe betwixt Men and Spirits, ſuch may clearly ſhew the intereſt that Man's Soul hath in another State and World than this.

Qu. III. *Is that great truth of the* Immortality of the Soul, *and its never dying ſtate after Death, as fully demonſtrable to Reaſon, as it is by the furtheſt certainty of Faith?*

Anſw. Though it be ſo amazing a thing to believe an *Immortal Soul*, and *Eternal State*, wherein it muſt ſhortly enter, as by few ſeems to be apprehended, yet are its demonſtrative evidences ſuch, that except men loſe all ſence and uſe of reaſon, it is not poſſible to deny. I. That there is ſuch an *Immaterial and Active Subſtance* as the *Soul*, which can admit of no cauſe, either of its decay or diſſolution, from the Body; yea that the greateſt excellency of this viſible Creation, is here, that ſuch a vital *Beam of Life*, *Light*, and *Immortality*, as the *Soul* of Man is therein. II. Though we cannot ſee this rare and wonderful Being, yet we fully perceive it to be ſomething *diſtinct from the Body*, and to have a diſtinct intereſt, both in its griefs and comforts. III. That it can have no dependance on the Body in its Being, which doth no way depend thereon in its Actings and Exerciſe; but is oft moſt vigorous and clear, in its exerciſe, not only when moſt *ſeparate* and abſtract from ſenſible things, but when the *fleſh* is under the greateſt decay, and near its *diſſolution*; to ſhew the *Soul* lieth not a dying with the Body, but hath its *diſtinct ſubſiſtence*, to live in a ſeparate ſtate, when it dies. IV. Its being peculiarly framed for converſe, and intercourſe with ſpiritual Beings, yea its being the only part of the viſible Creation admitted to fellowſhip with the inviſible God, and to have reflex acts upon it ſelf. V. It is a *Being* of a higher nature and value than the Sun Moon and Stars; which not only can know,

and

and conceive of things above the evidence and impreſſions of *ſenſe*, but make a rational choice of good, (though croſs to any ſenſual pleaſure;) yea to rejoice, and have its proper delights, when the body is afflicted and in pain; nor can it be defiled from the moſt loathſome ſores and defilements of the Fleſh, ſo as we muſt needs ſee both its Dominion and Preheminence over the Body, and have aſſuredly a ſubſiſtence without the ſame. VI. It is ſuch a Being, as is capable of a happineſs beyond the whole extent of the World, and hath theſe intellectual Faculties, which cannot poſsibly want, both objects ſuitable thereto, and injoyments above the Senſes. VII. The moſt choice and excellent, are uſually moſt afflicted, and cruſhed under the feet of their oppreſſours, whilſt the vileſt flouriſh in the Earth and have no bands in their death, ſo that ſuch were of all men the moſt miſerable, if in this life both their being and bleſſedneſs were terminated. VIII. That there is ſo *univerſal a ſenſe* of *Immortality*, that they who both fear and hate the evidences hereof, yet under ſome conſtraint of Reaſon, have the ſame for a continued terrour. IX. That it is ſure the *certainty of death*, makes it ſimply impoſsible, for things only ſuited to this Life of Senſe, to be the ultimate good, or fruition of Man; ſince elſe the *Beaſts* ſhould have a greater happineſs than ſuch, if it were not for reſpect to an after and *Immortal State*.

Qu. IV. *What confirmation to your Faith does that great and amazing change by* Death *offer, when it would ſeem to be ſomething meerly* natural?

Anſw. Though the only wiſe God moves herein according to the nature of ſecond cauſes, and it hath various ways of approach unto men, yet

may all ſee with the furtheſt conviction of rational evidence, as well as certainty of Faith, I. That *Death in its firſt conſtitution is Penal*; and comes by a Divine appointment unto all, not meerly as men, but as ſinners; and to be no *natural accident* and reſult of our Primitive and Original Frame. II. That it's *Death* as a *Penalty* which keeps the fear and dread thereof ſo much on all living, it being in that laſt period, that the eternal ſtate of Men is decided. III. That the *ſting* and bitterneſs of ſin, is ſo manifeſt in innumerable diſeaſes and ſtroaks of Death, which many feel an 100. times ere they *dye* once, beyond any other of the Creatures. IV. Though the Sentence of *dying* is on all, yet ſo great a difference is betwixt the Saints and reſidue of Men here, that its *penal* execution on the ungodly, is ſuch as nature can give no ſupport under it. V. That *ſupernatural preſages* and warnings hereof ere it come, are in all times known and ſure; yea ſuch extraordinary evidences are ſometimes of the preciſe time, as could have no poſſible riſe from any *natural cauſe*. VI. That its immediate *commiſſion* from a ſupream and *Inviſible Power*, is ſo evident in ſuch executions oft, of this Sentence, by *Sword*, *Famine* and *Peſtilence*, as the viſible *Finger of God*, in a juſt retribution unto men for ſin, may be no leſs ſeen, (and a ſupernatural *cauſality*,) than the effects have been undoubted and clear; to ſhew that ſuch is the ſtate of Man, that this great revolution by *Death*, doth each moment depend on a call from Heaven. VII. That the certainty of ſomething *ſupernatural* in this King of Terrours, is ſo known that as no relief can poſſibly be found, but in the *truth and power of Chriſtianity*, to ſet men

both

both above the fear of Death and an after State, when once it comes near. VIII. Yea that it is ſurely above the poſſibility of Nature, which can bear out in this great adventure and *trial* of Mens *Faith*, both in the truth and ſtrength thereof, at *Death*; for which end the Lord hath thus choſen that by ſo ſtrange an *entry*, and at ſo dark a Port they ſhould firſt paſs to the full enjoyment of that glorious ſtate above.

Qu. V. *What* evidence *and* demonſtration *can you ſhew, to confirm ſo great a Faith of an* Eternal Glory *prepared for the Saints in Heaven, and of its* earneſt *and* firſt fruits *here, as may ſtrike an undeniable conviction hereof on the World?*

Anſw. I. The viſible *ripening* and reſemblance to ſuch a ſtate in all the degrees of a Chriſtians growth, to a more *full ſtature of the man in Chriſt*, may be no leſs evident than the natural growth of our Body. II. Though the opening of theſe *Gates* of the *Second World* be hid, (ſo as no humane ſenſe can diſcern the *Spirit* in its *aſcent* through thoſe higher Regions, to that unconceivable *Paradiſe and Glory* in the *Third Heaven*,) yet is the *triumphant entry* and paſſage of innumerable Chriſtians at death, ſuch as hath oft been a matter of ſenſe and cleareſt evidence to the World. III. Such alſo were both *humble*, *tender*, and *ſincere* in their Life, and then in ſo great a compoſure of judgement, that all might ſee they knew what made them glad, and could ſwallow up both the fears and bitterneſs of Death; yea and this was not given for their own ſupport only, but for a more *publick uſe*, for the Conviction and Confirmation of others. IV. The ſtate of glory is demonſtrable and hath been oft

brought

brought down to Mens ſenſe, by theſe *raviſhing joys of the Martyrs of Chriſt*, and exultation of Spirit even in the *Flames*. V. Supernatural comforts attend the Life of Chriſtianity, and can have no poſſible riſe from the fleſh and outward cauſes, with that *Joy and Peace*, which by ſo natural a reſult follows *well-doing*, and any ſervice of love for Chriſt; which all may ſee to be the *firſt fruits* of that harveſt which is above. VI. Rare and marvellous a frame of the *new man*, ſet up in this lower Region of Grace, in ſo diſcernable a conformity to the bleſſed God, and reſemblance to another ſtate than here, to which the World is but as a place of Pilgrimage, trial and a *preparatory ſtate* only. VII. Viſible returns of joy and comfort Chriſtians have after ſaddeſt conflicts and downcaſtings, and ſuch day-break of *vital quickening beams of Divine Light*, that have often been no leſs evident, than that of the *Martyrs* at the Stake, who cried out, *Now he is come, he is come.* VIII. Their *breathings of Love* after an unſeen Chriſt and viſible effects of its power on men, might ſhew ſome begun *tranſlation* of the Soul ſo far herein, as to be more where it loves than where it lives. IX. Though we cannot ſee here, that *ineffable glory*, which is above, but ſhould have our *Faith* inſtead of *Eyes*; yet ſuch is the truth of *holineſs*, as doth not only evidence, but in its own nature partake of a *future glory*; ſo as every degree and act thereof doth enter in a begun ſtate of *fruition* and bleſſedneſs, and makes it ſimply impoſſible for a *good man* in any true exerciſe of Godlineſs, *not to be happy alſo*, and thus in a more near capacity to know that *joy unſpeakable*, and *full of glory*, which is above. X. By

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ſo ſure, known, and tryed a paſſage betwixt Heaven and Mens Souls in *Prayer*, with ſo ſetled a Trade of *commerce* this way, and certain returns, as with aſſurance ſuch can ſay, though they muſt *change their place*, yet not their *company*. XI. The whole diſpenſations of Providence in *Iſraels paſſage* through the *Wilderneſs*, and to ſo excellent a Country as *Canaan*, is no leſs ſure in its ſelf, than that it was given for an Embleme and *Type* of the journying and militant ſtate of the Saints here, and to be a ſolemn pledge of that *Canaan above*. XII. Such is the Magnificence, Harmony and Order of theſe viſible *Heavens*, and *Celeſtial Bodies* there, with their different *degrees* of *glory*, (though all illuminated from the ſame Fountain of Light the Sun) as we may judge by a *Divine Ordination* to have ſome peculiar reſpect to that end, to awake and raiſe our thoughts to theſe *higher Regions of Glory*, which are above all theſe, by what is thus viſible to our Eyes; where the redeemed of the Lord ſhall be ever fixed, and *ſhine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*.

Qu. VI. *What viſible and awakening* evidences *are there of the truth of an* Hell, *and that ſtate of* horrour *and* torment *in another World, which even to mens* ſenſes *here, might preſent the certainty thereof*?

Anſw. I. That it can be no more ſure, that there is ſuch a power and party as that of the *Devils*, than the reality of ſome ſuch a *horrid Region* and place alſo, to which they belong, and are adjudged to. II. From ſo innumerable a company of *human race*, as are not in the viſible ſervice of theſe *Infernal Spirits*, but partakers of the ſame nature

and

and *enmity* againſt the *Holy God* and his *Image*, which doth clearly witneſs their reſpect and tendency to the ſame *ſtate* and *place*, and Confederacy in their *judgment*, as here in their *ſin*. III. Such viſible impreſſions of *vindictive juſtice* are on mens Souls, with ſuch *horrour of Conſcience* and unſufferable torments this way, as in all Ages have been known by moſt remarkable inſtances, (when not in the leaſt diſtemper of their natural reaſon,) that may preſent to mens *Senſes* ſomething of a *viſible Hell*, as convincingly, as if one had *riſen from the Dead*, for the ſame. IV. A trembling *ſenſe*, and *terror of Divine Vengeance*, oft follows upon *horrid acts of wickedneſs*, and ſo eminently breaks forth upon a ſurpriſing ſight of *Death*, that all may ſee ſomething more dreadful herein than in the diſſolution of Nature; and the Power and preſent Arreſt of a *future judgment* is made viſible in the ſame. V. There are begun degrees of *blaſpheming and rage* againſt God, becauſe of his *plagues*, and ſuch *prodigies of cruelty* exerciſed by Men here in the Earth, as may be evident to all to be more than humane, and rather the effects of infernal ſpirits acting in a humane ſhape. VI. So clear a *prelude* and beginning of Hell, is in that judicial *obduration*, and blindneſs, which many are given up to, (under the greateſt diſcoveries of light,) that all may ſee their being thus bound over in *Chains*, and ſhut up in *Priſon*, until *Death* bring them forth to the *Execution*; and that no relief or application of the means of Grace hath then any ſucceſs. VII. Such a Map and Shadow of *Eternal Vengeance*, is in theſe terrible acts of Divine Judgment inflicted here on *Apoſtates*, and *Perſecutors*

ſecutors of the *Truth*, and other flagitious perſons; which with the very firſt view might preſent an awful and immediate appearance of God in the ſame, ſome *ſtrange* and ſupernatural *puniſhment* is oft ſo viſible on the *workers of Iniquity*. VIII. And (whatever be of natural cauſes in ſuch viſible repreſentations here in the Earth, as that *ſulphureous Lake* where once *Sodom* was, and thoſe burning Mountains of *Hæcla*, *Ætna*, and *Veſuvius*,) yet we may truly judge that they are thus ſet before the World as viſible memorials of the *Infernal Flames*; and as it were ſo many Chimny's or Vent-holes thereof, for ſuch who will not believe the ſame, becauſe they do not yet ſee or feel ſuch a thing.

Qu. VII. *What* aſſiſtances *hath our* Faith, *of that great and wonderful truth of the* Reſurrection of the Body, *after its diſſolution in the* Grave unto Duſt?

Anſw. I. It hath great aſſiſtance from that viſible and ſtupendious frame of the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, when it's ſure that the ſame *Infinite Power*, that hath not only made Man, but the whole Creation, can as eaſily collect and reunite the diſperſed *aſhes* of the *Body*, as *form the ſame*. II. From that greateſt pledge hereof, in the *Reſurrection of the Body of Chriſt*. III. From that tribulation and ſore pain, that the Saints here in their outward man are expoſed to, ſince it is ſure that in the holy juſtice of God, he did not give ſuch *Bodies* for *labour*, and for toil, and to his *Martyrs*, to endure unexpreſſible torments for Chriſt, at laſt to periſh for ever. IV. From theſe viſible *reſemblances* and *prefigurations* of the *Reſurrection* which the Lord hath given to confirm our Faith herein,

in

in the ordinary courſe and *productions of nature*; ſo as all may ſee how every *night* is as the *Grave* of the *day light*, and each morning a new reſurrection of the ſame; and how viſible an image of *Death* is in each ſeaſon of the *Winter*, with ſo marvellous and beautiful a *Reſurrection* of the Earth, on every return of the Spring, in the *Herbs*, *Flowers and Plants*, taking life and riſing again, in the *leaves*, *bloſſoms and fruits*; yea this in ſuch a variety, as may no leſs convincingly evidence an Infinite Divine Power herein, than that the ſame body of man ſhould be raiſed at the *laſt day*. V. From that continued *miracle* of the *Harveſt*, after the *Seed-time*, with ſo amazing a production of the *Grain ſowen* in the Earth, and its firſt dying there before it be quickned, ſo as to be at laſt brought to 30, 60, yea ſometimes an *hundred fold*, out of the very ſame grain; which to theſe who had never before known the ſame would ſeem incredible, and above all reaſon to conceive, or give credit thereto.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Confirming Work of Religion, *improved with reſpect to the* Times, *to* clear the way of the Lord *herein, before this Generation, and let us ſee how nothing is ſo ſtrange in the* Events *of this day, which ſhould not more ſtrengthen, then ſhake, and that the* God of the Reformed Church, *doth ſtill own the ſame Intereſt, according to his* Faithfulneſs: *Which is here briefly Pointed at, upon ſome ſpecial* inquiry, *propoſed about the ſame.*

SECTION I.

Qu. I. *WHat can afford both* Light, *and* Confirmation to our Faith, *in ſuch a time, when we ſee the* Work of the Lord, *about his Church, to be moſt remarkably now a* work of Judgment, *with ſuch dark and ſearching Tryals therewith, as former times have not known.*

Anſ. It is ſure, we have ſeen nothing, but what might have been too evidently looked for, and that we can pretend no want of *Light* herein, upon theſe Grounds. I. That the *Trials* of a Church, ſhould be ſuited to the meaſure of their *Talent of Light*, and when this hath been in ſome more than ordinary way diſpenſed, that ſome remarkably *ſearching Times* might be expected to follow; nor can it be now ſtrange to us, that ſuch things fall in with this *day*, which did not meet the *Churches* of *Chriſt* at the *firſt entry of the Reformation*, who then had not ſo clear Diſcoveries of the Truth, and that meaſure of *Confirmation* therein, which hath been ſince.

II. That

II. That ſome unuſual *Tryals*, and *Conflicts*, in the Lords Method of Providence, ſhould be ſuited alſo, to the greatneſs of that *Work*, which he is bringing forth, may be no ſtrange thing; and to ſee a time of ſuch ſore wreſtlings as this, when all things ſeem to cry, and *be in Pain*, as *Micah* 4. 20. Yea when ſome great *event* of the Scripture is to be revealed to the World, and near to its *full height*, and *Period of Accompliſhment*, (as we have ſafe ground for Aſſurance of this day.) III. Nor hath this ſad and diſmal hour on the Church, been more obvious than the *provoking Cauſe* hereof, in which the *Holy Righteouſneſs of God*, may be no leſs clear, than the *Cloud* now is dark; when there has been ſuch a Viſible falling off from that *Love*, *Tenderneſs*, and *Power of Religion*, that did formerly attend its Profeſſion; for theſe many years paſt we might have ſeen that ſome ſore and remarkable Judgment was coming, and that if we had not been in *ſuch a manner undone*, we were, under ſome ſadder ſtroak of Spiritual Judgment, ready to *be utterly undone*. IV. Yea it hath been too Viſible, that ſuch *Evils* followed the *Reformed Churches*, as in no time it was ever known, that the Holy God, did paſs by, without ſome ſignal Evidence of his *Wrath* againſt the ſame before the World. V. We know that *Carnal Confidence* hath a *Curſe* ever waiting upon it in the *Scripture*, and none can take it off, or make that thrive which God hath himſelf curſed; and it is too viſible, how far we have gone thus out of the way of our Strength, by ſuch eager ſeeking *Humane Props*, and ſupport, that we have forgot the *Guide of our Youth*, and *Covenant of our God*, and what great things he hath formerly done in the

the greateſt ſtraits of his Church; when there was much humble *truſting*, that the *Spirit of the Lord*, would do more to recover his Truth than all Humane Might or Power, could do.

SECTION II.

Qu. *WHat Talent, are we ſtill accountable for to ſupport our Faith againſt the greateſt* Fears *of this time, from theſe* immediate Appearances of God, *and of the* Glory of his Power, *for the ſame* Truth and Cauſe *of the* Reformed Church, *we are now called to contend for, which hath been ſince the Reformation when ſo ſtrong and unuſual a Tide, now is againſt the ſame?*

Anſ. If men ſhut not their eyes, and *hide* this great *Talent* of the *Works of God, under the Ground*, it's ſure none can Queſtion ſuch a *Seal*, which before the Sun, (to the Amazement and Conviction of the World,) hath been put to the Truth of the *Reformed Religion*; that we are now brought under ſuch a *Call*, as the Church of *Iſrael* was, *Deut.* 4. 34. To *ask of the Times, that are paſt*, ſince *Iſraels* coming out of *Egypt*, and ſince the firſt planting of the *Gentile Church*, by the *Goſpel, whether there hath been ſo great a thing as this in the Earth, that God hath eſſayed to take to himſelf a People from the midſt of other Nations*, by *Temptations, by Signs, and by Wonders*, and *by War*, and by *a Mighty Hand*, and by *an out-ſtretched Arm*, and *by great Terrours*, according to all that the *Lord our God* hath done for the reſcue of his People, in theſe *laſt Times*, from *Antichriſtian* Bondage and Darkneſs;

and ſettling them in a Church-ſtate; but *unto us was this ſhewed, that we might know, that the Lord he is God, and there is none elſe beſide him:* Ye are ſtill called to ſee, and be as *Eye Witneſſes* to theſe things; I. How *Bright a Day* of the Goſpel of Chriſt, did go before this great *Darkneſs* on the Church, and what a ſolemn *Triumph* in theſe late Ages the *Truth* hath had over *Antichriſt*, ſo as the *full ſtroak* and ruine of his Kingdom, (which is ſure and eſtabliſhed in the *Promiſe of God*,) ſeems not now more marvellous and above humane appearance, than what *we have ſeen*, in the begun degrees of its accompliſhment. II. In how few years alſo, there was, as a *new Chriſtian World* brought forth, in that ſwift Courſe and Progreſs which the ingathering of the Reformed Churches had, ſo as between the Year 1560, and 1621. ſuch famous *Plantations* of the Goſpel were ſetled in a Church-ſtate; which all may ſee was the immediate Work and Power of God; to ſhew that none ſhould fear, or *ſtagger at his Promiſe*; though the waters yet ſwell, and come to the *flowings* of *Jordan*, and difficulties appear unſuperable to humane Sence, after theſe great things which the Lord hath done. III. How extraordinary a *Calling*, and excitement of *Inſtruments*, was then evident, for the Service of that time, and *Reapers* thus eminently prepared for ſo great an *Harveſt* of the Goſpel, as might put the World to inquire whence theſe were, in ſo numerous a Concurrence, when a few of ſuch a Spirit, were ſo rarely to be found in many Ages before. IV. Yea ſuch an Acceſſion alſo, of *Spiritual Gifts*, and Endowments was then for *Building* of the Church, as had not been formerly known, ſince the firſt coming

ming of the Gospel to the *Gentiles*; wherein it may be said, the *Glory* of these *last Times* hath even in some degree exceeded that of the *first*. V. And can the most dismal things of this time, countervail the *Confirmations of our Faith*, who have so clearly seen, with the first breaking up of the *Purer Doctrine of Christ*, the *Power and Life of Christianity* came therewith to the World, as a *Seal*, and Attestation thereto, beyond any *Miracles*; yea how innumerable a Company, in these last Ages of different Tongues and Languages, and these so remote from one another, did not only receive the same Truth, but with such Resolution Adventure their Souls thereon, as might fully witness, they had another prospect of *Christianity*, and to be in some other manner ravished with the *Glory* and *Beauty* of the same, than is now in these times: VI. Such high *Spring tides* of the *Power*, and *Efficacy* of the Gospel, might be evident to all, after so sad a restraint had been for so many Ages before, under *Antichristian* darkness; for whatever was then as a *Private Seal*, on the Spirit of Christians whilst the Witnesses did *Prophesie in Sack-cloth*, yet was there no such Evidence and *Demonstration of the Holy Ghost*, or a *Publick Confirmatory Seal* to the Truth, as was after the *Reformation*. VII. Yea was it not the most Sober, Serious, and Inquisitive Part of Men, upon a sure Trial of the Grounds of their Faith, who did most firmly imbrace the same; and how many of these also were of the greatest Parts and Abilities, whom none could Judge to Adventure so far herein, without the highest Assurances, that this was their undoubted Interest and Salvation. VIII. We have seen not only men of mean

and low Eſtate, but ſuch of the *Higheſt* Place and *Quality*, moſt chearfully adventuring whatever Intereſt could be deareſt to them in the Earth, for the Truths ſake; yea it was ever found, that ſuch as were moſt acquainted with the Reformed Religion in its Power, and lived up in their Practice to what they profeſſed thereof, were thoſe who with the greateſt Aſſurance, moſt reſolutely ſtill adhered thereto. IX. We have ſeen alſo, its moſt remarkable ſpreading in the World, when there could be no poſſible pretence of a *Worldly Intereſt*, or External Motives for the ſame. X. We have ſeen ſomething not only extraordinary, but even *Miraculous* in the *Joy*, and *Reſolution* of innumerable *Martyrs* ſince the *Reformation*, who did bear out with a more than humane ſtrength, againſt a cruelty ſo viſibly *Inhumane*, and Savage; yea which did in ſome degrees exceed that meaſure of the *Heathens*, in the *Primitive Times*, as being againſt a greater Light than theirs. XI. And have we not ſeen of what Spirit, ſuch ſtill have been ſince the *Reformation*, who were the moſt notorious Inſtruments in the Churches Perſecution, and how viſibly ſuch did act herein, under ſo impetuous an incitement of the *Devil*, that as *Tertullian*, in his *Apology* ſpeaks of *Nero*, the Truth might boaſt in having ſuch Adverſaries. XII. It is ſure we have ſeen, that no humane Power, could yet ever undo this bleſſed Intereſt of the *Reformed Religion*, tho' no way, or change of Weapons, hath been left untried; but we have thus ſeen, whither ſo ſtrong, and united a Confederacy, as the *Catholick League* in *France* did at laſt reſolve, and not only in the ruine of the greateſt Actors and Contrivers therein, but to a further

ther eſtabliſhing of the *Reformed Churches* there, as though ſuch had Intentionally acted for the ſame; when if *ſecond Cauſes* had brought forth their Ordinary effects, it might have been judged impoſſible to fail. XIII. We have ſeen that iſſue of all the Councels, Expence and Cruelty of *Philip the* II. *of Spain*, to bear down the Truth of the Goſpel in the *Netherlands*, which was to the furtheſt ſetling of this *Illuſtrious State* and the *Church of Chriſt* there; yea how their Conſpicuous Riſe and Flouriſhing even in the Externals, and their reſolute adherence to the Truth of Chriſt did moſt viſibly keep together. XIV. We know that *deluge of Blood*, which ſo quickly followed the *French Maſſacre*; and the moſt diſmal time which ever that *Nation* knew, did then viſibly Contemporate, with ſuch a time of their greateſt Rage and Perſecution againſt the Truth, and that Event of the *Third Vial* moſt clearly fulfilled herein, *Rev.* 16. 5, 6. *Thou art Righteous, O Lord, which art, and waſt, and ſhalt be, becauſe thou haſt judged thus, for they have ſhed the Blood of thy Saints and Prophets, and thou haſt given them Blood to drink in great meaſure.* XV. Yea have we not ſeen how *four Kings of* France Succeſſively, were in leſs than thirty years, taken away, in the ſame continued purſuit, how to deſtroy the Church there, in whom that whole race of the *Valois* was thus extinct; yea in the manner of their Death, were moſt remarkable Monuments of Divine Judgment, as the moſt famous Writers of that time do atteſt. XVI. We have ſeen what marvellous effects did follow thoſe Bloody Years of *Queen Mary's Reign* in *England*, to promote and commend the Proteſtant Doctrine to Mens Conſciences there,

with ſo great a Triumph as it had in the Sufferings of ſuch choice and excellent witneſſes for Chriſt, and hath brought in more Rent to the Praiſe and Glory of their Bleſſed Head, than may to the furtheſt compenſe all that Blood of the Saints there, though highly *Precious in the Eyes of the Lord.* XVII. We have ſeen likewiſe the Blood and Cruelty of late, againſt the Proteſtants in *Bohemia*, in a ſhort time moſt Viſibly returned on the Authors thereof, and how the immediate Finger of God might be ſeen in calling forth the *Swedes* to avenge the ſame, and in that deſolating ſtroak which followed in *Germany*. XVIII. We have ſeen in theſe late Times the Iſſue of that horrid *Maſſacre* on the *Proteſtants in Ireland*, to the utter ruine (in a very few years after,) of that Barbarous Party, who had thus acted herein. XIX. We have ſeen what wonderful Providences did attend the actings of that poor handful of *Proteſtants* in the *Valleys of Piedmont* ſince the *Reformation*, upon the account of that Bloody *Maſſacre* which was ſet on foot there againſt them, which was ſo aſtoniſhing as all might ſee an extraordinary Appearance of the Lord herein, as is clearly atteſted by the moſt Faithful Hiſtories of that time. XX. And can it be forgot unto this day, how viſibly a Divine Hand did appear in breaking that great *Spaniſh Armado*, in the Year 1588. which had been for ſome years in Contriving againſt *England*. XXI. Aſtoniſhing, and ſpecially Demonſtrative of the immediate Power and Preſence of God, and matter of Wonder and Praiſe alſo for after Ages, was that ſolemn time of the *Reformation* of the *Church in Scotland*, for planting the *Reformed Religion* there; with that zeal and oneneſs of

Spirit,

Spirit, as did then appear in all ranks to imbrace and adhere to the Profeſſion thereof, amidſt the greateſt threatnings of their Adverſaries; ſo as a *few Years* did bring forth that, which would have ſeemed ſtrange for an *Age* to accompliſh; yea that we find betwixt the laſt *Martyr* for the Truth there, who was *burnt* at St. *Andrews*, 1558. and the eſtabliſhment of the *Proteſtant Religion*, and full aboliſhment of *Popery*, with the full Concurrence of *Civil Authority* herein, in *July* 1560. was but little above two Years, to ſhew what great things the Lord can do, above all Humane Council or Confidence. XXII. It's ſure we have ſeen in what remarkable degrees theſe *laſt Vials* of the Holy Judgment of God, have taken place on the Kingdom of *Antichriſt*, and how Conſpicuous the *Event* hath been of that *Prophecy*, 2 Theſ. 2. 8. in theſe great Effects and Conſumption thereof by the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, as an aſſured Pledge of the full Accompliſhment of what remains herein. XXIII. And as every ſtep of the Churches Riſe, hath been ſtill advanced in a continued Conflict betwixt the *Truth and Antichriſt*, ſo have we ſtill ſeen, when the Aſſault and Oppoſition hath been greateſt, its moſt remarkable tendency to a greater Victory; which were it rightly conſidered upon clear and ſolid grounds from the Scripture, the moſt formidable appearances of Trouble from this Adverſary would with more Comfort than Fear this day be looked on; ſo that whatever be the neareſt and moſt immediate events, yet is it ſure, as *the Lord is true*, (whoſe Word is paſſed hereon,) that whoſoever gives their Power and Strength to ſupport that Intereſt of *Antichriſt* ſhall loſe the day, and find their Cauſe

desperate, for the party with whom they contend herein is the Son of God, against whom no humane Power shall ever be able to stand. These are but a *few*, which are here mentioned, of the great *Acts of our God*, in behalf of his Truth, to be still as present in our sight, in a time when the Spirits of many are ready to Stagger and Faint; and here mentioned, to lay no stress or weight of the *Authority* of the Truth and Doctrine of our Profession thereon, but on the alone *Revelation of the Scripture*; but they are such an undeniable Seal for Confirming our Faith, and of so known, *Publick* and *famous Evidence*, as should be no less considered and taken to Heart now, than in the time when the Lord thus appeared herein.

SECTION III.

Qu. *WHat* present Judgment *are we called to have of this* Time, *upon clear and assured grounds from the* Scripture; *that we may know under what* aspect *thereof, the present* State of Religion, *and of the* Reformed Churches *is under, when so great a* Crisis *is this day, as would seem to be in the very Height of its Conflict, whether as to Life or Death?*

Ans. It is no present Appearance of the time that must Direct our Faith, nor should we either stretch our Fears or Expectations of Things and *Events*, beyond what the God of Truth doth warrand in his Word, but it's clear, if we credit the same, and admit the *Divinity of the New Testament*, there is no just Cause of Hesitation or Darkness as to what the Lord is bringing forth for his Church now in

these

theſe latter days; nor can there be any pretence, to ſeek another *Light*, (either from the *Stars* above, or the *Diviners* of this Time,) when ſo woful a Trade hath got up in the World, that men will thus go *to the God of* Ekron, as though there were not a *God in* Iſrael, or ſuch a thing, as his *written Oracles* to inquire at, when it's ſure theſe lie open, and with a clear and diſtinct ſound ſpeak to all who have a Serious and Unprejudged Spirit. I. That the *Church* under the *New Teſtament* hath now paſſed and gone through that moſt diſmal and continued *Tryal* herein, which was to go over her Head under *Antichriſts Reign* and *Height*, and whatever appearance he now hath in great Wrath, yet is it ſure and evident that the *Winter is paſt* and the *Churches Spring* begun; and a few ſteps further off, that Judgment which is now haſtning on, will at length end the quarrel; ſo that by a near converſe with the Word, we may clearly ſee from what *point* the *Churches courſe* and motion this day lies, and how exactly it keeps, in the Certainty thereof, by the clear *Conduct* of the *Scriptures of Truth*, where a full *Map* of her whole *Courſe* and Paſſage through Time is clearly ſhewed. II. That we may now with ſome clear Evidence Judge, and have our Faith perſwaded hereof, that the *Churches* Intereſt is upon the *riſing Hand*, and on a preſent Advance, though nothing would ſeem more Contradictory than all viſible grounds now are; ſince this cannot fail, *John* 3. 30. That *Jeſus Chriſt* in his Kingdom in the Earth *muſt Increaſe*; yea that the Scripture ſo clearly Points forth *Antichriſts* Ruine and Progreſs of his fall and downcaſting, with reſemblance to that great Judgment on *Pharaoh* as an evident *Type* here-

of;

of; in the ſame judicial ſtroaks of *Induration*, on both, and *gradual* Progreſs herein by one *Plague* after another, until the laſt and greateſt Aſſault, as was then at the *Red Sea*, hath the ſame effect for a more glorious appearance of God, in the greateſt ſtep of Judgment, and Victory over this Adverſary, when not only the *Song of* Moſes, but of the *Lamb* alſo, ſhall be then *ſung*, *Rev.* 15. 3. as importing ſomething more glorious and a greater brightneſs to be put on this *Illuſtrious Act of Divine Judgment*, reſerved to theſe laſt times, when a more *immediate Appearance of the Lord* will be ſeen, than in any former deliverances of his Church. III. It is no Conjectural thing, but what by a clear Scripture Conduct we may ſee, that this time of the *Church* now under ſo notable a *Criſis* in her Caſe, is evidently falling under that *Remarkable Aſſault and Conflict*, with that Adverſary, before the accompliſhing of that *Vial* on *his Seat and Throne*, as we may ſee *Rev.* 17. 13, 14. That when ſo Conſpicuous a ſtep of the *Churches Victory* is near; the Oppoſition thereto alſo will be in ſome higher degree proportionable to the ſame, when the great men of the Earth, and ſuch *who ſhall receive Power as Kings, one hour with the Beaſt*, ſhall have one Mind, and give *their Power and Strength thereto*, and *ſhall make War with the Lamb, but the Lamb ſhall overcome them, for he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, &c. Nor is it found through the *Scripture* where the Lord hath done any *great thing* for his Church, but ſome unuſual *darkneſs*, and *ſore-wreſtlings* have ſtill gone before, and ſhould be no matter of ſtaggering to our Faith, (whatever it be of preſent Fears,) to ſee ſo diſmal a *Time of Tryal* as now is, and amazing heighth

heighth of trouble beyond what former times have known, when one of the *greateſt events* of Providence in behalf of the Church, ſince the revealing of *Chriſt* to the World, until his *ſecond coming*, is aſſuredly near in the fall and overthrow of the *man of Sin*. IV. We have clear ground alſo to judge, that ſo great an *Eclipſe* as ſeems almoſt Univerſally over the State of the Reformed *Churches*, is no going *down of the Sun* thereon, (whatever did befal the moſt famous *Eaſtern Churches* to an utter diſſipation thereof;) if theſe different *Periods* of time be juſtly conſidered, how their *Sun-ſet* did then fall in with the *Entry* of that *great Apoſtacy* of the Chriſtian Church and with that long and diſmal Night of *Antichriſts Reign*; whilſt now this hour of Trial on the Churches, doth meet in that bleſſed *Period of Antichriſts begun fall*, and of a growing Light of the Goſpel, and when the *Scripture* ſo clearly warrants our Faith herein, that the Work of Providence is to *Plant*, and not *cut off*, but to bring forward that Intereſt of the *Reformed Churches*, in the founding of which the *Mediator* hath ſo eminently appeared in the Glory of his Power in theſe *laſt times*. V. It is ſure we now live in the Evening, and Extremity of time, when the motions of Providence may be expected to be more quick and ſpeedy, as being ſo near the Centre, and to the laſt *Epocha*, and Period of all *Prophetick Chronology*; wherein the Glory of God in his Truth and Faithfulneſs ſhall moſt eminently ſhine forth, and theſe Scripture Truths which were formerly dark and abſtruſe, with that Evidence ſhine forth in the event, as ſhall cauſe men to wonder at their former thoughts and ſtumblings thereat. And here I muſt ſay, that

there

there is ſuch a ſight now in the Earth, as the *Romiſh Church*, in its Complex frame and ſtate, in ſo different a mold caſt from any Power or Juriſdiction elſe, and ſuch a Compound of a *Civil, and Spiritual Monarchy* in one and the ſame Perſon, is ſo ſolemn and undeniable a *Seal* to the *Chriſtian Faith*, and *Divinity of the New Teſtament*; that it's ſtrange why this is not improved more, againſt the *Atheiſm* of this time, that ſuch a viſible event of the Scripture is now in being, which was ſo clearly foretold by the *Holy Ghoſt* 1500. years ago, with its proper Circumſtances, as to the manner of that *Antichriſtian ſtate*, with its *Riſe*, *Growth*, and *Duration*, as is to Admiration ſtill evident to the World, when not the leaſt ſhaddow or appearance of ſo ſtrange Future Emergencies was to be ſeen or could have entred mens Thoughts; to ſhew it only could be revealed to the Church by him, to whom all his Works are known from the Beginning. This I have looked on, as ſuch a *Confirmation* to the Truth of Chriſtianity, that no Miracles in the firſt times of the Church could have more evidence for the ſame; yea if ſuch a party were not in being, both what it now is and in former Ages hath been, it might in another manner ſtagger the Faith of the Saints, to a queſtioning the Truth of the Scripture, than its moſt formidable appearance this day can do. VI. I ſhall but add here, that we know and are ſure the Lord hath reſerved his greateſt works to theſe latter days, wherein his Judgments ſhall be manifeſt; and that one of the moſt eminent Manifeſtations of his Glory before the cloſe of time ſhall be Conſpicuous in the *fall of Antichriſt*, on whoſe ruines that *Glorious Houſe* which Chriſt is yet to have

have for himſelf both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ſhall be prepared and built up; and though this great *Eclipſe* of *Antichriſtian Darkneſs*, ſhould yet more prevail, even over the viſible Profeſſion of the Truth in the *Churches* of *Britain*, and *Ireland*, there is no cauſe to be ſtaggered in the Faith of *Romes fatal Period*, being near, but to look hereon according to the Scripture, as the laſt attempt of that wounded Adverſary, which will be found in the iſſue to have the moſt immediate Connexion with his greateſt downfal, and the *Reviving Glory* of the *Church*; *for ſtrong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*

SECTION IV.

Qu. WHat *is* ſpecially called for, *in this day, of ſuch as are accountable for ſo great a Talent of Light, and Confirmations to our Faith?*

Anſ. If this were ſuitably taken to Heart, we could not but reckon our ſelves under the greateſt excitement and *call*, to ſuch an improvement hereof.

I. That we account it not enough to have a *Faith*, for quieting our own Spirits, but alſo to *confirm* others, by *putting to our Seal that God is true*, in the great Aſſurances of his Word, and to *Sanctifie him before the World*; which is ſo important a Duty, as the Lord was wroth even with a *Moſes*, and *Aaron* for one ſhort-coming, when he called for the ſame, *Numb.* 20. 12. and it's ſure in no time was ſuch a ſpecial truſt more repoſed thereon, than in this Age, both

both as a publick Debt on the Church, and Perſonal on each Chriſtian, how to witneſs for the Lord, upon that great Intereſt of his Faithfulneſs and for Tranſmitting the ſame, to the Ages to come, by a Confirmatory Seal, and Teſtimony thereto.

II. To reckon our ſelves alſo under ſome more than ordinary *call* this day, (each in their preſent Capacity and Station,) to appear for the *Credit* of the Truth, and *ſtemm* ſo viſible and impetuous a *Tide*, as is now running of *diſtruſt*, and of a diſcreditable *faintneſs*; for it may be ſaid, never was the *Church* under the *New Teſtament* ſo remarkably held under ſuch a Trial, as that wherein the Lord did *prove* the *Church of Iſrael*, Numb. 14. Or had a more evident reſemblance thereto, in the ſame Circumſtances as in this day, if they were ſeriouſly pondered; As I. How in the ſame manner, ſuch a falſe and *evil report* is too viſibly raiſed upon the bleſt ways of the Lord, to diſcourage and faint the Spirits of his People, as was then by the *Spyes*, that there were inſuperable difficulties in the way of the Promiſe, by Reaſon of the *Anakims*, and of their *walled Cities*, and did thus oppoſe the Credit of *Senſe*, to all theſe *Aſſurances which God had given to their Faith.* II. That this highly diſhonourable *Cowardice* and *Diſtruſt* did ſo ſeize on that People, as was like to reſolve in a viſible revolt, and to *cry for* a *Leader* to *go back to* Egypt again; which amongſt too many in this time may be juſtly feared. III. That this was after ſuch extraordinary *Confirmations* which the Lord had given to the Faith of his *Church* then, who had by his own immediate and

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out-ſtretched hand, ſo lately brought them out of the *Houſe of Bondage*, and from *the Iron Furnace in Egypt*, as rendred their misbelief to be a guilt under ſuch Aggravations, as the Holy God did in that manner plead, *Verſ.* 22. *Theſe ten times have they tempted me, who have ſeen my Glory, and my Miracles, which I did in the Wilderneſs*, &c. IV. But herein we hope, and are Confidently ſure of a bleſſed *Diſparity* in this reſemblance, as to the *numerouſneſs* of ſuch, who ſhall be found of the *Reformed Churches*, to Act ſomething of that part, which theſe *Heroick Witneſſes*, *Caleb* and *Joſhua* did; and were then put to ſtand alone therein; who through Grace ſhall yet appear with ſome meaſure of that Spirit, and withſtand ſo high a Tide of fears, diſcouragement and unbelief as is at this day, and thus to plead againſt the ſame as theſe did, *Num.* 14. 9. If the Lord delight in us, then let us not rebel againſt him, neither fear the greateſt difficulties that can be in the way, *&c.* V. And is not the ſame Precedent of Providence, of ſo ſingular a reſpect as the Lord did then teſtifie to his *Caleb* and *Joſhua* (who were of *another Spirit* in *following him fully*, in that day) a continued Aſſurance, for all who ſhall be helped to any honourable appearance of this kind, by making them ſee, and inherit the Truth of his Promiſe; yea that ſuch a reſidue as out-lives this great and amazing ſtorm ſhall have ſomething of that Teſtimony to bear alſo, which *Caleb* gave, *Joſh.* 14. 8, 10. *My Brethren which went up with me made the Heart of the People faint, but I fully followed the Lord my God, and now behold the Lord hath kept me alive*, &c. O

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bleſſed they, whoſe Souls are raiſed with that Holy Zeal for the Truth, to ſtand up in this great breach, by a reſolute Profeſſion of their Faith, and Witneſs to the Faithfulneſs of God, as ſuch great and extraordinary Confirmations, given thereto, now call for.

III. It is one of the ſpecial Duties of this day we ſtand alſo accountable for, how to ſtemm this high and growing *Tide of Prejudice, and Reproach* againſt the *Reformed Religion* which in ſome unuſual way is now aloft, and raging; and by Manifeſtation of the Truth to gain ſome more awful regard hereof on mens Conſcience, that they may ſee ſomething of the *Glory of our Profeſſion*, and in what manner it maintains its Conqueſt as no way elſe can poſſibly claim; I. Which reckons none to be the true and genuine Profeſſours hereof who imbrace not the ſame upon *Evidence*, and with reſpect to its *Intrinſick Excellency* and worth; nor does Judge the Intereſt of Religion to go by *number, and poll*, where this is wanting; but purſues that end to have men ingaged *firſt to be Chriſtians*, that they may be true and ſincere *Proteſtants*; and therefore can admit no ſuch Methods of any baſe Compliance with the Humour and Intereſts of Men, which its Principles will not bear. II. Which in its courſe is ever *regular* and Certain, according to the Rule of an *Unchangeable and Eternal Truth*, without dependance on the will of man herein, or any mutable Revolutions of the Time. III. Which doth with the greateſt luſtre ſhine forth in the Brighteſt *Light*, and is maintained by the *cleareſt Knowledge*; yea by the furtheſt plainneſs, and openneſs of Heart, to-

towards all, commends it ſelf; ſo that the World may ſee, it eſpouſeth not mens *Affection*, before it gains on their *Conſcience*; and it hath their Judgement fixed on a judicious Tryal, before their Reſolution; nor accounts the Truth of Religion, can ever ſubſiſt by an *external ſhew* and Profeſſion, without its known *Evidence* and the *Efficacy* thereof on mens Souls. IV. Which ſincerely follows the *Catholick Intereſt of Chriſtianity* and publick good of Mankind, in promoting the great *Ends of the Goſpel*, ſo as the World may ſee its higheſt Intent is to exalt all *Divine Inſtitutions*, and advance the *Simplicity*, and Spirituality of *Goſpel Adminiſtrations*, (according to the revealed *Rule*) amongſt Men, as that which doth moſt nearly concern the *Vitals of Religion* and an *Inward Life* of Communion with God. V. Which Pleads an Impartial Tryal of all its Adverſaries, whether the Principles of our *Profeſſion* or of *Popery*, give the greateſt Security to *Civil Government*, and founds the ſtrongeſt Obligations to *Magiſtracy* and to all *Civil*, and *Moral Duties*, by which the awe and venerable eſteem of Religion is kept up in a Nation. It is high time that men ſhould ceaſe to be implicite, and become expreſs upon this greateſt Intereſt they have within time, which is the Truth of their Profeſſion in the matter of Religion; when a Deceit or Miſtake here is of an Eternal Concern: Upon which account, without reſpect to Intereſt, Party, or Education, I have this day ſought to know the Truth, and what Adverſaries could poſſibly pretend, to *Reproach*, or Prejudge any for the *Reformed* Religion; All they can do, is but to charge mens Corrupti-

on and Offences in their Practice, upon the *Rule* and *Principles* of their *Profession*, that can never give the least *Latitude*, or Connivance thereto, but is *clear as the Sun*; when on the other hand I could know no other way, to imbrace such a Profession, as *Popery*, but by turning *Atheist*, in the *first Place*, and then quitting both *Religion* and *Reason* at once: But I can say, in a resolute Adherence to the Doctrine of the *Reformed Church*, I fear not to adventure my Soul, and enter into an Eternal State.

FINIS

AN IDEA,

Of the Confirmed State of a Chriſtian in Diſmal and Shaking Times.

THo' the Meaſure of all *Chriſtians Eſtabliſhment* in the Truth be not alike, but muſt have reſpect to their different *Trials*, *Talents*, and *Improvements* for this end; yet may it cauſe Aſtoniſhment to ſee, how rare any Study of this kind is now to be found. When it's not only one of the higheſt concerns of *Chriſtianity*, but in a more than ordinary way called for, as the *Work of this day*; yea, being this is a part of Religion, which ſeems leaſt improved of any, for the *more general State of Profeſſours within the Church*; under ſome Conviction hereof, was this Eſſay deſigned; wherein with humble Confidence (I may ſay) the *Truth* hath been ſought with that Serious Enquiry into the *Nature of theſe things* held forth, as I judged needful for ſuch, who have ſo great an Intereſt, and Adventure not only through *Time*, but for all *Eternity*, to ſupport themſelves upon the alone Certainty hereof; and ere theſe *days of Trial*, which we now ſee, paſs over

this *Generation*, it may be found this was not unſeaſonable, or without cauſe directed to ſuch a time, if the Lord graciouſly bleſs the ſame; nor will it (I hope) be found unneceſſary to preſent yet further, ſome clear proſpect of a *Confirmed State in Religion*, and what thoſe ought to be, who with Light, and Aſſurance of Mind are like to *follow the Lord fully*, in ſuch a day; which is here offered in a *ſeven fold Character*, under which a *truly Confirmed Chriſtian in the Truth of his Profeſſion* may be *Stated*.

CHARACTER I. He is one *who hath another Sence*, and *Impreſſion of this great Study for attaining to a Confirmed State in Religion*, and is on *higher grounds preſſed to follow the ſame*, than *moſt of the Viſible Church do apprehend*; and ſhould be thus Conſidered.

1. As one to whom the *Glory of the Chriſtian Profeſſion* is in the higheſt Degree dear, and who would have the World ſee, that ſuch as imbrace the ſame, and do moſt fully Adventure on the Teſtimony of God in his Word, are thoſe who walk on the higheſt Principles of true, and *enlightned Reaſon*; yea, who take deeply to Heart that Obligation which is on all, who deſire to advance the *Repute*, and *Honour of the Truth*, to be in ſuch *Terms*, therewith upon its *own Evidence*, that they may know how to Confute and Shame *Atheiſts*, and *Infidels*, if called thereunto.

2. Who ſee alſo, that ſuch is the State of *fallen Man*, as ſtands in need of all the *Contributions* that can be, not only to ſtrengthen the *Chriſtians Faith*, to bear out againſt the ſtrong Aſſaults of *Infidelity*, but to gain alſo more Credit and *Veneration* to the Truth, with thoſe who are not eaſily dealt with, but by

ſuch

ſuch *means* as bear ſome *Congruity to their Natural Light, and Reaſon*; for which end the Lord hath afforded his Miniſterial helps, to render the Unbelief of the World, and all pretence of Heſitation about his Truth more inexcuſable.

3. He alſo ſees, that the moſt important, and *Fundamental Truths* of Chriſtianity, need the greateſt *Confirmation in his Faith*; and thoſe who enter into ſo high and diſcriminating a Profeſſion from the reſidue of the World, need to know in what manner they embrace the ſame. He ſees that the *natural Order of things* does abſolutely require to have the *Foundation* ſure laid, on which ſo great a *ſuperſtructure* muſt reſt, ſo as he judgeth it a *Work by it ſelf*, and to need ſome peculiar retiring his Soul in the moſt ſerious *receſs*, and Compoſure thereof, to attain *a ſtedfaſtneſs* in the Truth, and to know the ſtrong and *firm Conveyances* of that greateſt *Myſtery* of the Goſpel, in ſuch a manner, as needs not *a new Miracle* to Confirm the ſame. But he knows that no ſharpneſs of mens *Natural Underſtanding* about the Truth can ever attain a true *Reſt, and Settlement of Mind* therein, without an *humble*, and *ſerious Spirit* ſtooping down before the Wiſdom of God, and entring as a *little Child* into his School; and by that humble *Practice*, and Obedience of the Goſpel, there is an undoubted coming up to the greateſt Aſſurance and *cleareſt Demonſtrations of the ſame*, as *Joh.* 7. 17.

4. He knows that as nothing tends more to ſhake Mens Spirits, and ſtagger them about the Truth, than a *Light and Tranſient View* hereof, ſo does the greateſt *Eſtabliſhment* follow, on the neareſt approach by a *deep and ſerious Enquiry* about the ſame;

and he clearly ſees that if ſuch who look but at *a diſtance* on the way of Religion, did but once come to have their Spirits exceed in a more ſerious Reflection thereon, the *firſt view* they ſhould have, could not but be matter of Wonder, and Amazement; to think what can ſupport a Soul in ſo marvellous a way as the Life and *Practice of Chriſtianity*; Which is ſo viſibly above Nature, and that wherein they muſt do violence to the ſame; wherein they muſt *part with the* Multitude, *and oppoſe themſelves to the ſtrongeſt Tide of* Example, *and muſt* endure alſo in Hope, and *believe for things not ſeen*, (which were never the Object of Humane Sence,) to any in this Earth; and are oft called to part with the moſt deſirable things of *Sence*, upon the alone Credit of their *Faith*; yea, wherein they muſt enter that Profeſſion, on no other *Terms*, than to be *Martyrs* for the ſame, and *Seal it with their Blood*; ſo that he muſt needs ſee a Chriſtian according to the *Rule* and *Inſtitution of the Goſpel*, to be the greateſt *Riddle*, and *Wonder* of any ſight within time; but when ſuch come more cloſe and near upon this *Trial*, and have once underſtood the *Nature* and *greatneſs of that Security* which theſe have to adventure on, and what is the Glory of their *Hope*, and the ſure Spring of their Supplies, for their Work and Trials within time; then will this *ſecond wonder* unſpeakably exceed the *firſt*; how it's poſſible that ſuch are not of a more *raiſed*, and *enlarged Spirit*, in the ſervice of the Goſpel, in that ſhort ſeaſon they have here for it on the Earth, and how their difficulty ſhould not be more, to *bear the Joy of ſo great a Proſpect, and Expectation*, than to bear any preſent Griefs and Troubles. Yea how a mans Life,

who

who indeed ſincerely makes the Chriſtian Profeſſion, is not in ſome more continued tranſport of *raviſhment and wondering*, to know that they are ſurely made for their *Eternal State* in another World, and are among thoſe, on whom the *glorious God* hath choſen to have the exceeding Riches of his Grace ſhewed forth, in the *Regions of Bleſſedneſs* above for ever.

5. He hath another ſight and proſpect of the *Chriſtian Creed*, than moſt who give an eaſie Aſſent thereunto; and hath his Reaſon ſo dazled with the *Revelation of the Goſpel*, and of the *Wonders* thereof as hath put him to ſuch an Exerciſe as that 2 *Chron.* 6. 18. How to Credit his Eyes therewith, the more deep Reflection he hath upon the ſame; *But will God in very deed dwell with men on the Earth?* He judgeth that they, who after ſome fluctuating ſuſpence, are admitted to ſee the Truth of Chriſtianity, with that *Certainty of its Evidence*, as the greatneſs of ſuch a diſcovery does require; may have ſome reſemblance to that tranſport which the *Angels* had at the *firſt Creation*; *when the Morning Stars Sung together*, and *the Sons of God ſhouted for Joy*; to ſee themſelves thus, who were brought out of pure nothing, entred into that ineffable Light of ſeeing God, and alſo their own bleſſedneſs in him, in ſo high a degree. So that he accounts it one of the higheſt Attainmenrs of Religion, for a *Chriſtian indeed to believe the Articles of his own Faith*, and have his Soul as fully perſwaded hereof, as of his being; that ſuch a time aſſuredly was, (and is now many Ages ſince paſt,) when the *glorious Redeemer of the Church*, the *ſecond Perſon of the God-head came down from Heaven*, and was re-

vealed in our Nature; that on him, as *Surety* to Divine Juſtice in the room of the *Elect* Church, was the whole *Guilt*, and *Sin* thereof transferred; and in this marvellous way did the Holy God *take Satisfaction to Himſelf, by Himſelf*; that thus our Nature is *exalted*, by the *Incarnation of Chriſt* above the *Nature of Angels*; that the time is near when the meaneſt afflicted Chriſtian, ſhall take in no other *Air*, than the Breathings of the *higher Paradiſe* above, and now hath an Eternity of Joy, and Bleſſedneſs before him; that within a very little time he ſhall know this *welcome of* our bleſt Redeemer to his Followers here on the Earth, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father inherit the Kingdom*, &c. When he ſhall take off the *Croſs*, and put on the *Crown*, when it ſhall be then no more a *matter of Faith*, but of *Sence*, to be *Partaker of that Inheritance* with the Saints in Light; and know thoſe *Proper Manſions* in that State of Glory, and peculiar *Aſſignment* thereunto, which all the Redeemed ſhall then have; and be put in the ſame rank with the *Elect Angels*; to be as thoſe *pure flames* of *Love*, and *Joy*; yea know what it is to walk in the Streets of the *New Jeruſalem* which are as *Gold*, *Tranſparent as Chriſtal*; and what that meeting will be of his *Soul Perfected*, and in a *Triumphant State*, with his *Glorified Body*, raiſed incorruptible, and never to part any more; and to have his proper ſhare of that bleſſed and *greateſt Solemnity*, that ſhall be celebrated in Heaven; the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*, with the whole Triumphant Church; and hear that honourable account which the *great Judge* will then make of theſe *Trials* of his Faith, and ſharp conflicts which he had gone through within time;

with

with that *ſolemn Teſtimony of Approbation*, which will be given hereof! And ſince it's ſure theſe *great things* muſt be a part of the *Chriſtian Faith*; can it be ſtrange, that ſuch, as would in that manner converſe therewith (tho they be not yet ſeen) as no leſs undoubted *Realities* than any preſent *Objects of Senſe*, cannot be eaſily ſatisfied with a low degree of Evidence and Confirmation of their Judgment; but would have their Joy perfected ſo far as this State of Mortality can bear; and ſo find it eaſie to *Rejoice*, and *Glory in Tribulation*, and to weep now for a Seaſon, who are to rejoyce for ever; yea to ſay in the Words of *Mephiboſheth*, Let them take it all, and enjoy the ſame, ſince he who is their *Life, and Exceeding Joy, Lives and Reigns*, who is Infinitely better to them than all theſe things.

6. He accounts the *Strengthning of his Faith*, to be ſuch a concern, not only as it is his *Souls Adventure for all Eternity*, but as the *higheſt way of Glorifying God here*: That whatever tends to a more full *Confirmation* of the ſame, he reckons alſo one of the greateſt *Additions to his Joy and* Comfort within time; and that theſe manifold *Aſſiſtances* (with ſuch *Reduplication* thereof) which the Lord hath himſelf given for this end, are ſuch that *no Fragments of ſo rich a Talent ſhould be loſt*; and tho he knows the greateſt *Demonſtrations* of our Faith can add nothing to the *Certainty of Divine Truth* in it ſelf; yet are they thus given in regard of the ſtrong *Trials* of a Chriſtians Life, and of what their *weakneſſes* ſtand in need of for ſupport.

7. It's in this Study, he ſees and takes to Heart, how not only the *Condition of Man* in the Earth, but the *Profeſſion of Chriſt* alſo calls for ſuch a reckoning,

koning, that he may have *Trials* in that manner dispenſed, that no *viſible refuge* will be found in the leaſt to ſtand by him, but all humane Comfort and Aſſiſtance will fail him, ſo that he muſt needs lay in Ballaſt now in its Seaſon, and be founded thereon with that Aſſurance of Judgment, as is needful for that Day, when he muſt either get through in the alone way of *Believing*, againſt *Sence*, or *Periſh*. And tho no ſuch Attainments of Light can bear out then, without preſent, and immediate *Influences* from above, and that it is ſure *according to the Day, ſo muſt the Chriſtians Strength be*, yet does he ſee alſo, the want of an eſtabliſhed Judgment, and of ſome *proper ſtock* laid up of *Aids*, and *Aſſiſtances* this way againſt a ſharp Storm, is like to make *ſad work among the Profeſſours of this Age*, ere the Trials of ſuch a time have done their work.

8. He ſees alſo how the greateſt *Conteſt*, which is this day in the World, is *betwixt God, and Man*, upon the *Truth and Aſſurance of his Word*; and that the higheſt *Trial*, and *Probation of a Chriſtian*, in which all the Trials of his Life do ſtill meet, may be reſolved here; if they receive *the Teſtimony of God* in his Word as an *abſolute Security* to relie on, yea or not. And tho this is the peculiar Glory of the *only true God*, to have an abſolute *Dependance* of his whole Work on himſelf, and to be the *alone Centre of his Peoples reſt*; yet may nothing be more evident, than that with moſt he bears that Name, of *being their truſt*; when the whole burden and weight thereof lies alone upon viſible grounds; ſo that thoſe *Bonds, and Promiſes* which he hath himſelf given unto men, do bear no more Credit, than they have ſome *External Surety of in the Earth*, which they

ſtill

ſtill look after, to ſtand as it were good and *reſponſible* for the ſame, which is the higheſt *Indignity* can be offered to the glorious Majeſty of God.

9. He does much take to Heart this *preſent Period of time*, wherein the fluctuating ſuſpence, and *halting* of ſo many under a viſible Profeſſion of the Truth, is now one of the moſt diſmal Signs hereof; and that it ſeems to be the *time*, wherein the Lord will in an unuſual way take this Generation off from any *implicite Profeſſion* of the ſame; and when that *great Roll of Viſible Profeſſors* in all the *Reformed Churches*, may be ere long in that manner *called*, as *each muſt anſwer to his own Name*; and be put to ſtand to the *Proof* before the World; when no Temporal Intereſt, but *Internal Motives* and Certainty of the Truth upon its own *Evidence*, muſt bear one out; yea that the moſt *eſtabliſht* may ere long find it not eaſie to be kept from Staggering; and a few days come in the Churches way, more remarkable for *Trial*, than have been in ſome *Ages* before.

CHARACT. II. *A truly confirmed Chriſtian*, may be thus alſo ſtated, as one who is in the *firſt place* moſt deeply taken up about that *rare Plot of Mans Redemption*; and to ſee theſe *great, and wonderful Truths there, not ſingly*, and *apart*, but in that *Harmony, Order*, and *Conſent of all the parts thereof*, as *they are linkt together in this marvellous frame*; *ſo as to make the whole one entire piece.* And whereof no part does in the leaſt interfere with another. Which he finds to be one of the moſt *Principal Demonſtrations* of this great Myſtery of the Goſpel, which the Lord hath given for *Confirming* his Peoples Faith. And thus in another manner than formerly, can he now entertain his Soul herewith;

and

and have his Joy unſpeakably heightened. 1. To ſee at once the *ruined State of fallen Man*, and what a Flood-gate of all Evil is let looſe on *Adams Race*, not only *Morally in Sin*, but what is *Penal* in the *Woe*, and Miſeries thereof; yea ſuch a State, where all Hope of relief is for ever cut off in the way of Nature, or by any created help; and where the Execution of a *Righteous Sentence* on men for the voluntary Violation of a *Law, Juſt, Holy* and *Good*, can be no Impeachment (in the leaſt) of the *Righteouſneſs of God*; But then therewith he does ſee ſuch a relief brought to Light, as can not only anſwer the whole extent of this ruin, but the *Glory of God* more eminently diſplayed therein, than if the *Law* had been *obeyed*, or *abſolutely executed* in its *Penalty* on the whole race of man. Yea, (which makes this more wonderful,) to ſee a higher *Diſpenſation of Grace* unto man, now under the Goſpel, than was to *Adam in his Primitive State*; whereby innumerable Chriſtians are made to endure and prevail over *ſtronger Aſſaults*, than broke him even in his *Integrity*; which is a thing ſo marvellous, that the great and Infinite God only could find out and effect it. 2. He does now ſee how clear a Conſiſtence and Harmony is here, that he who had no Sin by *Inheſion*, but was Holy, harmleſs, and Undefiled, ſhould be under the greateſt weight of Sin by *Imputation*; and by the exacteſt Rule of Divine Juſtice, be made liable to anſwer both the whole *Duty, and full Penalty of the Law*; having, as *Surety* betwixt the *Creditor* and *Debtor*, put himſelf in his Peoples room, to anſwer the full demands thereof both for *Debt, and Duty*. 3. It is here he does ſee that bleſt Conſent and Harmony betwixt the

ſpot-

ſpotleſs *Juſtice of God*, and his marvellous *Grace*; ſo as his *Love* is to the higheſt glorified, in that marvellous way, which ſecures the full and compleat Satisfaction of his *Law*, and all the rights of Inviolable *Juſtice*. 4. Whilſt he is thus dazled with the greatneſs of ſuch a Light, and put to enquire what ſuch a myſtery can mean, he is then further led on to ſee that *rare Plot* and Contrivance of the *Covenant of Reconciliation* between God, and Man, here within time; to be the very *Duplicate*, and *Counterpart* of that Eternal Tranſaction, and *Stipulation between the Father and the Son*; and thus ſees whatever God hath declared, and *promiſed* in the former to his Church, was firſt *promiſed, and ſecured to our Bleſſed Head in the Covenant of Redemption*; wherein as with a Reverend and Awful Diſtance, ſo with the greateſt Evidence of Light he is made to ſee here theſe reciprocal *Obligations* betwixt them, and *mutual Truſt* for making good the whole Terms thereof in the appointed time. 5. He does alſo clearly ſee that rare *Order*, and *Harmony* of time in theſe *ſignal Periods* of the Revelation of this great Myſtery of Chriſt, which from its more dark Diſcovery, and Dawning, did ſtill more glorioufly open its ſelf to the *Church*; by a *gradual Light*, and unvailing of the ſame, as the *Sun* in its Courſe unto the perfect day; yea he hath his Faith thus unſpeakably confirmed, to ſee herewith the *Goſpel Church* being ſtill the ſame, whither of *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and how that *Series*, and *Conſent* hath yet never been broken off ſince the beginning of a *Church* called forth from the Reſidue of Mankind, ſet apart as a peculiar People for the Lord; where none ever had Right and Priviledge to be Members of the ſame,

but

but by *Faith in the Meſſias*, and Profeſſion of their Obedience to his Laws. 6. It is in this *Union and Harmony*, he ſees all the Branches, and Parts of Goſpel Obedience moſt exactly meet, and terminate, to advance both the greateſt Excellency and *Bleſſedneſs of Man*, and *Aſſimilate* him to the *Bleſſed Image of God*. Yea, how all the Rules, and Precepts thereof do ſo entirely Conſpire for this end, as may conſtrain the World to ſee, and admire the *Glorious Nature*, and *Perfections of him*, whoſe Laws theſe are, wherein he does ſo brightly ſhine forth. 7. Nor can he look ſeriouſly herein, and not ſee that ſweet *concord* as a part of this *Harmony*, which is betwixt the *Promiſſory, and Mandatory part of the Goſpel*; ſo as the Chriſtians Comfort is moſt fully eſtabliſhed, and no Duty aboliſhed; but the very Path-road to the moſt full Enjoyments of the Promiſe, and proper way to attain reſt, and tranquillity of Spirit, muſt be ever by taking on the yoke of Chriſt. 8. Yea (to Confirm this entire Union, and Harmony more fully,) he now ſees that exact and marvellous Correſpondence which is betwixt that firſt *Fundamental Promiſe* of the *Meſſias*, and the *Event*; betwixt all the Ancient *Figures and Types* of the *Levitical Service*, and the Revelation of *Chriſt himſelf*, in which all theſe did meet as in their proper *Centre*, and now have their full End and *Accompliſhment*. 9. His Confirmation thus grows to ſee that wonderful Conſent of *Chriſtianity*, and Native reſult hereof, *to put fallen man in a due poſture towards God, towards his Neighbours, and towards himſelf*; ſo as he may know by *Faith* and *Adoration* how to *enjoy God*, and his *Brother*, by *Love*; and thus by *Patience*, *Meekneſs*, and *Humility*, to *poſſeſs his own*

Soul,

Soul, and enjoy himſelf. 10. Yea it is in this rare and wonderful frame, he is made to ſee (and no ſight can be like this) that exact correſpondence which is betwixt the *Foundation* and *Superſtructure*, how the whole *Tract of the Goſpel* is but one Entire and Compleat *means to Glorifie God*, and *reſtore fallen Man* to the higheſt Bleſſedneſs? How that excellent Stream of *Sanctification*, does flow from that Fountain Head of an Eternal Decree; which does ſtill run under the Ground, until it *break up* at laſt in the Heart of each Chriſtian, by the *Effectual Call of the Goſpel*; and thus runs down through time until it loſe its ſelf in that unconceivable deep of *Perfection* and *Glory*. Thus is it that each Chriſtian might attain ſome higher Degrees of *Confirmation* in *his Faith*, than moſt ſeem either to know, or look after, if he underſtood more how to improve this rare *comparing work of Religion* by ſetting the great Truths and Principles thereof in their Order, and Dependance, ſo as each may be ſeen, in its neceſſary *Coherence* with other, and under its *proper aſpect*.

But the more deep Reflection and Enquiry he hath herein, he is the more made to wonder, and finds this one of the great Aſſaults to his Faith? that the *Revelation of Chriſt, and Redemption by his Blood ſhould have no greater effects this day* amongſt men, and that the *Chriſtian World* is not in ſome other manner awakned with the *Glory* of this Light, and preſt after a larger ſpreading and *Diffuſion* of this *higheſt* and *univerſal good* to poor mankind; Yea the more he conſiders this, it doth heigthen his Amazement to think how mens deſigns in the matter of Duty and Service for the Kingdom of Chriſt, can be ſo *low* within time, whoſe *Deſigns* and *Hopes* in

in the close thereof are so *high* in the matter of *Enjoyment*; or take so little to heart, that the whole *Day of the dispensation of the Gospel*, (amidst the most dismal Tryals that may fall in therewith,) is a continued time wherein we are called to *keep the Feast*, and from one Age to another celebrate the same, as a perpetual *Jubilee of Joy, and Exultation*, since *Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us*; but oh how rare a thing seems this to be, and how little of that flame and fervency of *Love to our Blessed Redeemer is now kindled on his Altar*? Such as might be expected on such wonderful ncitements thereto, and which once were in the Church.

CHARACT. III. Though a *Confirmed Christian* must be specially stated as such, one who *knows the Internal part of Religion, and Sealing work of the Holy Ghost* on his own Soul, which is not by *words*, but *things* of the highest *Truth, Substance*, and *Reality*; yet is he not satisfied to know this by *Spiritual Sense*, until he can see the same with the furthest *Evidence of Light* also to his mind; and have no less a clear and *judicious Tryal* of this great Mystery of *Experimental Religion*, for confirmation of his Faith, than to be *sensibly* affected with the felt power thereof. And in the *first place* why this is necessarily requisite and called for, with respect to the *Confirmed State* of a Christian, may be thus *considered*, on some *few grounds*.

1. That the things of Religion, which must be *experienced* within time, are such sublime, and *wonderful Mysteries*, as may be just matter of astonishment, and make men a wonder to themselves, to think that these present *Pledges* of so great a hope which is to come, are no *shadows*, no appearances of things,

things, but moſt ſure, and undoubted *realities*; and that ſuch there are this day in the Earth, who know ſo near a converſe with an *Inviſible God*, and the *ſupernatural Truths* of his Word, with the ſenſible feeling of the *ineſtimable Love of Chriſt*, by this demonſtration of *Experience*; yea, who in ſuch diſmal Times do aſſuredly know what the *Joy of his Preſence*, and an immediate Fellowſhip with their bleſſed Head is, upon the greateſt certainty of Tryal; ſince theſe are ſo high, and marvelous things, which exceed all *Natural Underſtanding*, as the *felt Sweetneſs* of their enjoyment ſhould not more deeply take men up, than to ſee the *Truth*, and *Sureneſs of theſe Principles*, whereon they build.

2. Becauſe this Teſtimony of the Truth of *Experimental Religion*, ſhould be underſtood not only as it's of higheſt uſe for Chriſtians *Perſonal Comfort*, and Eſtabliſhment; but with reſpect to the *Publick Intereſt* of the Church; a ſpecial duty it is to have the *Credit* of this greateſt Teſtimony, and *Seal*, *demonſtrably cleared*, with the furtheſt ſtrength of *harmonious*, *and argumentative Reaſon*, for ſuch who look but at a diſtance yet thereon; which may not only awaken them to ſome deeper *ſenſe*, and impreſſion hereof, but conſtrain them to ſee, how no *Natural Science* hath more clear, and firm *demonſtrations*, than the *Experimental part of Chriſtianity*, (which is the very Life and Soul thereof,) may have to mens *Reaſon*, and *Judgment*, tho' they never knew it within themſelves. Yea for this end ſhould ſuch, as have experienced the *Truth*, and *Vertue of the Goſpel*, reckon themſelves as *Witneſſes*; who are *judicially obliged* to *put their Seal* thereunto; and is now more called for, in an Age when no particular

Truth ſeems more ſtrongly impugned, than the *Reality of Experimental Godlineſs* is; and become as a *Publick Theam of Deriſion*; tho' men muſt either quit the whole Revelation of the Scripture, or ſee this to be as *Eſſential to the Conſtitution of a Chriſtian*, as *Vital Principles* are to a *Living Man*.

3. Yea it's ſure herein, that ſuch as take Religion to heart, muſt needs look to be put to the *greateſt Tryal of its Certainty*, and ſhould moſt nearly concern themſelves, to know if they can *abide as firmly by their Spiritual Senſe*, as by that which is *Natural*; and do know as ſurely in themſelves the *Operations, and Motions of a Spiritual Life*, as that they have being by *Nature*; and that here be no doubtful or abſtract Notions but which have had deep *Tryal, and Reflexion* on them; that they who dare to venture their *Eternal State* on the known certainty thereof, do *Reaſon* their Souls to a ſtedfaſt adherence to the Truth, when they are called to *ſacrifice their Lives* thereto; to wit, from the *Rare Experiments*, and *Proofs*, they have oft had of the ſame in their own *Tryal*.

4. It doth more ſpecially call for a demonſtrative clearing of the Credit of this Teſtimony, as one of the *Services of Religion*, to promote the Kingdom of Chriſt amongſt men, which ſeems leaſt *improved* of any with reſpect to the *general State* of ſuch who are within the Church, who are ſo great ſtrangers to the ſame; yea ſhould be judged one of the *great wants* of this day, when Atheiſm is now at ſo aſtoniſhing a height, that it is not more ſtudied to have the *Experimental part of Religion*, (which in it ſelf lies deep and hid, and is a ſecret betwixt God and the Chriſtians Soul,) with ſuch *clearneſs*, and

by

by that *manner of Evidence* demonſtrated to the World, as might tend to beget ſome more *Awful Senſe* and Conviction hereof, (when ſuch clear and unanſwerable grounds might be improved for this end) on thoſe who look thereon as ſome ſtrange and dark Riddle, ſo as they could no more deny, or withſtand the *Evidences* hereof, than that they have a *Living Soul which yet they never ſaw*; or could ever be the Object of Human Senſe. And how ſad a proſpect ſhould this give of the greateſt part of the *Chriſtian World*? who not only know nothing of the *True Glory*, and *Spiritual Powers of Chriſtianity*, but have not the very *Notion*, or any *Senſe* of the reality of ſuch a thing.

But in the *2d place* it is thus that each Chriſtian, for being ſolidly confirmed in the Way of Religion, may as *clearly ſee*, as he does *ſenſibly feel*, the Truth of his own Experience, and have his Faith as fully eſtabliſhed by this *inward*, and *great demonſtration* of the things of God, as his *Affections are quickened*, upon ſuch ſtrong, and *demonſtrative grounds* of the *certainty* hereof, as theſe are.

1. By *conſidering* his *preſent*, and *former State*; that not in a dream, but in the moſt deep and ſerious compoſure of ſpirit, he knows that *once he was blind*, and wholly eſtranged from this Myſtery of *Chriſtian Experience*, which now he does ſee; and once had the ſame *ſentiment* hereof with ſuch who do never at all reflect on the ſame; but no ſooner did the Truth, and *Power of Religion* ſeize on his Soul, than he found himſelf *entred into a new World*, to know the dawnings of this *marvelous Light*, and what belongs to theſe Enjoyments, and *Vital Acts* of Chriſtianity, that have not the leaſt dependance on any *Natural Cauſe*.

2. By considering the *marvelous Superstructure of Experimental Religion*, which from the *inward observation of Christians in all Ages*, is such as the *World could not* almost *contain the Books, that might be written hereof*; which yet is so entirely founded on one, and the *same Foundation*, and does in all the *Lines* of this great *Circumference*, still meet in the *same Center*; yea thus how entire, and *harmonious* a thing Religion in all the parts thereof is *within* upon the Soul, as well as *without*; so as every *step in this way* of the *Experience* of the Saints is no groping in the dark, but what is by *Line* and by *Rule*, with as sure, and demonstrable a connexion with the *External Testimony of the Word*, as there is in *Nature* betwixt the *Cause*, and the *Effect*; which affords a more wonderful assistance to his Faith, than the greatest *External Miracles* could ever do; and tho' the Spirit of God does sometimes in an *extraordinary manner* reveal himself to men, (*as acts of his Soveraign Prerogative* which make no *Rule*) yet with the Established *Constitutions of his Word* does the continued Experience of the Saints most harmoniously ever *correspond*.

3. By considering thus also the *Being*, and *Reality of Grace*, not in its *Effects* only, but in its *proper Cause and Original*, and how the *Truth of Holiness* in the Life of a Christian is so express a Transcript of the Gospel, in its *External Revelation*; that the *Impress* doth not more clearly answer *the Seal on the Wax*, than it doth beget the same *Form and Image of it self* in such as *believe*; yea also that conformity it bears to the *ever blessed Archetype, as well* as to the *Revealed Rule*; and how bright a discovery is this of so *glorious a Being, and Nature*, to which

which it's conformed? Who is the alone *Pattern*, and *Example of all Truth and Holineſs*; which is ſo great a diſcovery, as he is made to wonder, that men in this Age are ſo much awaken'd to find out the *true Phænomena of Nature*, (tho' in its own room a moſt choice ſtudy, and ſpecially deſirable,) and will be as in a *Tranſport*, upon ſome rare *Natural Experiment*, as made one in that manner cry out, ἕυρηκα ἕυρηκα, *I have found, I have found*; whilſt here is another kind of *demonſtration*, and of more tranſcendent intereſt than all theſe could ever amount to, on which the Eyes of moſt are this day ſhut.

4. By conſidering that *Unchangeable Congruity, which is betwixt the nature of theſe things, enjoyned in the whole Inſtitutions of the Goſpel*, and *mens being made happy thereby*, now in their *preſent ſtate*; and how great a Temporal Revenue of the Fruits of Religion, as inward *Confidence*, *Peace*, and *Serenity of Mind*, doth as natively follow the life, and practice hereof, as the *Fruit* of a *Tree* anſwers to its *kind*; and is ever found the alone *true relief of Mankind*, againſt all the griefs and bitterneſs of time; yea that it's no *diſtance of place*, but of *mens ſpirit* by *impurity*, and corruption, that makes ſo ſad a diſtance betwixt God and Man here in the Earth.

5. He is thus further confirmed upon this great *Teſtimony of Experimental Religion*, by conſidering that it's ſure ſuch as do bear this witneſs are known; 1. To be ſuch who are of the moſt *diſcerning, and judicious* in the things of *Reaſon*, as well as any elſe. 2. Whoſe *walk* and *practice* uſe to have the greateſt Authority over mens Conſciences with whom they converſe. 3. Who are found moſt intenſly taken up in the *retired work, and duties of Religion*; that can

have no reſpect to the witneſs, and obſervation of others. 4. Who ſeek no *Implicit Credit* from any herein; but do pray men to *come, and ſee*, and prove the ſame in their own *Experience*; with an *appeal* to the moſt exact Inquiry, and *rational Tryal* of all Mankind, if here be any *caſual thing*; and if that Teſtimony of the *Doctrinal*, and *Experimental part* of Religion be not ſtill one, and the ſame. 5. Who alſo out of the moſt *remote places* of the Earth, and otherwiſe ſtrangers amongſt themſelves, do yet moſt harmoniouſly meet in the *ſame Witneſs*, and are thus *mutually diſcloſed to each other*, by a near, and feeling intercourſe of their Souls, from ſuch an *Oneneſs in a Spiritual State*, and thoſe *Specifick Properties* of a *Spiritual*, and *New Nature*, with as diſcernible evidence, as if one *man* ſhould meet with another of the *ſame kind*, in ſuch a place of the Earth, which were only inhabited with *Beaſts*.

6. By conſidering alſo, (with a deep and ſerious reflection hereon,) that ſure, and known *Conjunction*, which is betwixt the moſt *rare Experiences* of a Chriſtians Life, and the moſt *ſearching Tryals* thereof, with that uniform Conſent that hath in all Ages of the Church been, in ſuch marvelous things, as theſe. 1. What *ſolemn Tokens and Teſtimonies of the Love of God*, and his *Acceptance*, are found uſually to meet his People in the *entry* of ſome great *Tryal*, or *Service* for him; even in ſome unuſual manner then, in *the ſenſe whereof*, as it was with *Elijah*, they have been made to *go many days after in a Wilderneſs-ſtate*; yea how this does not reſpect *Perſons* only, but *Churches*; that the Word ſtill uſeth to go before with ſome remarkable *confirming work*, to ſecure the heart before the *Croſs*, and ſome ſpecial Tryal

of

of *Perſecution* comes. 2. That as each day hath its *proper burden*, and work, ſo hath itits *proper allowance* provided for the ſame; which ſhould be no leſs ſought after by a Chriſtian, than his *daily Bread*, and when the preſſure of ſuch a day grows to ſome more ſingular height; ſo alſo ſhould the expence hereof be in Faith ſought for, and expected. 3. How the *choiceſt Mercies* are reſerved to the *ſaddeſt Times* of a Chriſtians Lot; and moſt uſually croſs to their own *choice*, and they have had the greateſt ſtruglings with thoſe *Methods of Providence*, which in the iſſue tended moſt to their Advancement. 4. Yea how the returns of a *long deferred hope* after much humble waiting have been to them, as a *Piſgah*, whence they have not only had a clear, and comforting *proſpect of their by-paſt Tryals*, but have been more fully confirm'd for the *time to come*; and can bear now that Teſtimony, *that the Lord hath cleared all paſt things to them*, and hath taken *the Vail off his work*, which for long had been as a dark and ſtrange Riddle.

7. This likewiſe gives a moſt clear, and confirming proſpect of that great *Seal of Experience*, when he can now ſee, both in his own caſe, and of others, what the *iſſue of believing in a ſingular Exigency, and Tryal*, and upon ſome ſpecial act of *truſt, and adventure herein, does at laſt come to*; which, the more deeply it's conſidered, he finds one of the moſt peculiar *aſſiſtances to his Faith*, and one of the *greateſt attainments of Experimental Religion* withintime; when he can thus ſee the ſame way of *believing*, (in ſome ſtrong and extraordinary aſſaults,) which he hath found to cruſh and break him herein; which hath carried ſo many thorow in their ſaddeſt Tryals; bring him alſo in *his turn*, to be an *inſtance in the ſame kind*,

to bear an honourable *Teſtimony* to this *ſure*, and *excellent way of believing before the World*, that none may fear, *after him*, to *hold by the promiſe of God*, and venture on that ſecurity, (tho' it then ſeem againſt hope,) whoſe *Diſpenſations*, *did yet never, never give his Word the lye.*

CHARACT. IV. He is a truly *confirmed Chriſtian*, *who in a diſmal time*, *is not ſtaggered in his Faith from the preſent ſigns*, *and appearances thereof*, but hath his *Soul ballaſted with ſuch ſolid grounds of confirmation* againſt the ſame, that thoſe *Providences*, whereat others do moſt *ſtumble*, tend to his further *ſtrengthening in the way of the Lord*, when he does now clearly *ſee*;

1. How *Tribulation*, *and the Croſs* make one of the moſt *illuſtrious*, *and beautiful parts* of the *whole frame of Providence about the Church*, and in the Lot of each Chriſtian; ſo as there can be no poſſible *ſtumbling* to any for want of Light here, that ſore *Tryals*, and *Diſtreſs* ſhould moſt remarkably follow thoſe in their *Journey*, who have an *Eternal Bleſſedneſs* before them in the *cloſe* hereof; when ſo great a part of the *Scripture* is directed not only for *comfort*, but for clear *conduct of the Chriſtians Faith*, through all the *intricacies* and *labyrinths* of ſuch a diſpenſation. He ſees how highly *congruous* it is to the Infinite Wiſdom of God, that ſo *ſtrait and narrow a way*, in ſuch a *ſtate of Tryal* as is here, ſhould go before the ſtate of everlaſting enjoyment; that there ſhould be ſuch a *Stage*, and *Theatre* alſo, whereon the *paſſive Graces of the* Spirit, may not only be *exerciſed*, but *diſplayed in their true luſtre*, and *glory before Angels*, *and men*. Yea, that thus the Redeemed of the Lord ſhould be firſt *trained* in ſo ſharp a *Warfare*, as may not only

put

put a *due value*, and *respect* on the greatness of that *Triumph*, and *Reward* which is to come, but be matter of *ineffable Joy*, and *Exultation*, that ever they were admitted thus to evidence their Love and Adherence to their *blessed Head*, and his *Truth* here on the Earth; and accounted *worthy* to be put on some *hotter service*, and to peculiar *Tryals*, and *Conflicts* this way beyond others, for some *example*, and encouragement to the *Church in their day*; and here also he can now see how the greatest *enjoyments of Comfort*, are more owing to the most sharp, and *afflicting Tryals* of their Life, than to the greatest *external Calm*; and that to *endure* patiently, and *suffer for the name Christ*, is such a Priviledge as the *Elect Angels* have not been admitted to. Yea, that the Lords *chastning work*, and sorest *smiting* of his own, is *an Act also of saving*; so that thus, the more deeply he searcheth here, the more does he *see*, *admire*, and *consent* to that *glorious piece of the administration of Providence* about the Church; and finds it to be one of the greatest *Confirmations of his Faith* within time.

1. He does now clearly see how the *Truth*, and *Faithfulness of God is commensurate to his whole work of Providence*; and that all the *Lines* hereof, as they do lead from his Revealed Counsel in the *Scripture*, (which is the *adequate sign* of his *Eternal Counsel, and Decrees*,) so do they return thither again, to make this great *demonstration* clear; that if a *full History were written of this World*, and what hath been conspicuous thorow the whole series of times past in all these Conjunctions of *Inferiour Causes*, (whether *necessary, free, or contingent*, and of such Events that seem most *casual*,) it should be nothing else but an exact Transcript, and *History of the Bible*, to bear this

this witneſs, *That the World is nothing but God ſet forth in his own Scripture-Light.* But tho' a full diſcovery hereof be not attainable within time, yet is it a ſad, and deplorable want, that the *great Acts of the Lord*, in each *Age* of the Church, are not more ſearched, *and ſought out of all them that take pleaſure therein*, that they may be *ſeen*, *obſerved*, and *admired*, by that part of the Creation, *Angels*, and *Men*, who are only in a capacity to know the ſame. Which is a Service for the Lord, wherein his *Praiſe*, and *Declarative Glory* is ſo highly concerned, that a Chriſtian ſhould account the meaneſt *Room* herein, one of the moſt deſirable Attainments within time. Yea it ſeems juſt matter of regret alſo that this comes not under a more *publick Care*, and notice of *Particular Churches*, and of the *Chriſtian Magiſtrate*, (where Religion hath any true regard,) to have ſuch *ſolemn Providences* as occur in that *time*, and *place*, which may be called moſt Inſtructive Providences *to the Church*, (and of a further reach, and extent than any Private uſe,) both *Search'd* after, and *Recorded*; as becomes ſo high a *Service to the Chriſtian Cauſe*, and one of the higheſt concerns of *Poſterity*, in Order to have them not only poſſeſſed of a pure *Religion*, but of that *Seal* alſo, which the Lord hath in the *great Acts* of Providence *appended* thereto. And thus to have that *Increaſe*, which each Succeſſive Age brings therewith to the *publick Stock of the Church*, looked after, as a piece of the greateſt truſt repoſed thereon; ſo that the Children riſe not up and ſay, we have not *heard*, *nor have our Fathers faithfully communicated* to us the *wondrous Works which the Lord hath wrought in their time.*

3. He

3. He is thus alſo taught to ſee the *Demonſtrative Cauſes* of the moſt ſtrange Judgments on the Church, to be as *clear in the Scripture* as they are in the *event*. And though the Holy God, in the day of his *Patience*, and *Long-ſuffering*, is not alike quick in the Execution of the *Sentences* of his Word; yet does he ever eſtabliſh the *Authority of his Laws* by the *works* of *his Providence* in the moſt opportune ſeaſon, and as *Judgment deferred* is no *acquittance*, ſo does it more threaten its being the *greater*, when it comes, than a *quick and preſent diſpatch*; yea though this *tempeſt* which now blows on the Churches of Chriſt, come to a greater height, and the darkneſs be ſuch, as *no Moon*, or *Stars* may for many days yet appear of any *Viſible ſigns of Hope*; yet is his Soul thus at reſt, whilſt he can ſee the *Credit of the Truth cleared*, on which he hath more in *truſt* than any *Adventure* within time; and doth rejoyce, whatever miſcarrying there may be of Inferiour *Ends*, that this great, and *ultimate End* of the works of God is ſecured herein; and the *Glory of his Truth* does ſhine forth in the moſt ſtrange and *amazing Acts of his Providence*, whereat many are ready to ſtagger, when they do not *wiſely* conſider the ſame.

4. He ſees now likewiſe, ſo *high a value which the Lord puts on the Trial of his Peoples Faith*, and that the great diſpenſation whereby he deals with men, is *by truſt*, and on the *credit of his Word*, as it adds further to his Confirmation, to ſee all humane, and *Viſible Refuges* oft taken out of his Churches ſight. Yea his *greateſt works* in the Earth make the *greateſt delay* ere they be brought forth, and his Churches Caſe is put ſo far beyond help before a *cure*, as the firſt quickning of her cruſhed, and almoſt *dead hope*, muſt

muſt be at the *mouth of the Grave*; and he is thus herein more ſingularly ſtrengthned, that when the Lord ſpeaks the ſame in the *way of Providence*, which he hath ſpoke in his Word, [*not by Might nor by Power*,] that he doth with unſpeakable Advantage *ſupply*, and *fill the room* thereof by the *next Word*, [*but by my Spirit ſaith the* Lord.] Which in this day ſhould with a *full Aſſurance of Faith* be both ſought and looked after.

5. It is in this rare *Study* he attains alſo the greateſt *Confirmation* to his Faith, that could poſſibly be deſired within time; to ſee now when it's ſo near the *cloſe* thereof, and after all the Revolutions of times paſt, how the *Truth and Faithfulneſs of God*, hath (as the Sun in its Strength,) ſtill kept its way ſtraight and fixt amidſt all thoſe dark Clouds, which have been to darken the ſame, and is now gone its courſe, until it draws near to the full, and perfect day; yea thus to ſee how *ſignally this preſent Age is held upon that ſame appeal*, andd ſolemn *Teſtimony* which *Joſhua* gave, *Joſh.* 23. 14. *That not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you, all are come to paſs to you, and not one thing hath failed thereof*; and *Solomon* did bear alſo at the *Dedication of the Temple*, 1 Kings 8. 56. *Bleſſed be the Lord that hath given reſt unto his* People Iſrael, *according to all that he promiſed, there hath not failed one Word of all his good* Promiſe, *which he promiſed by the hand of* Moſes *his Servant*; ſo is this now that great *Teſtimony of the latter days*, and the higheſt *Tribute* of *Praiſe to the Glory of God in his Truth*, which can be given by men, that this preſent Generation ſtands accountable to make the ſame, yea much greater appeal to the World, if they can inſtance

inſtance one *Promiſe* or *Prediction* of that ſacred record of the Scripture which hath ever failed or fallen to the ground, but may be *this day read in the Event*, and under thoſe proper *circumſtances* wherein it was to take place in its proper Seaſon, as evidently as it was *foretold*. And muſt ſtill bear the ſame witneſs, *Pſal.* 18. 30. *That the way of the Lord is perfect*, and *his Word tryed* on all the *Adventures of Faith*, and *Trials* which to this moment of time have been made hereof, and of his being ſtill a *Buckler* to ſuch as truſt in him, and are called to ſend this glorious *Teſtimony* to the ſucceeding *Ages*, that it may never ceaſe to *ſhine* or want a publick witneſs thereto before *Angels* and *Men*, until the *whole myſtery of God in his Word be finiſhed*, in that magnificent cloſe which ſhall be thereof at the *ſecond Coming of the Lord*.

CHARACT. V. A *Confirmed Chriſtian* in this day ſhould be thus alſo *ſtated*, as one who hath not only attained a *ſolid reſt* and *ſettlement of Mind*, upon the *Certainty of the Chriſtian Faith*, but does know the *pure genuine Truth of Chriſtianity*, amidſt ſuch high Oppoſitions betwixt the *Romiſh*, and *Reformed Church* herein.

And in the firſt place hath in this *manner* held himſelf upon ſuch a *trial*; 1. As one who knows there is but one *true*, and *ſaving Religion* in the Earth, to which God hath annexed the Promiſe of *Eternal Life*, which can never be divided againſt it ſelf. 2. Who knows that within a little while his *Religion will be tried* in the Truth thereof, at the *Tribunal of Chriſt*; where every man muſt *give account of himſelf unto God*. 3. Who ſees there can be no poſſible *indifference* in the *Exteriour Profeſſion* of either way, but

that

that ſo high a contrariety of Principles is in this *Oppoſition*, that if the *Doctrine of Chriſt* be on the one hand, it is ſure *Antichriſtianiſm* muſt be on the other hand. 4. Yea who hath in that *abſtract manner* ſought to *ſtate the Caſe* herein with his own Soul, as if he were juſt come out of *Paganiſm*, to give a ſerious aſſent to the *Divinity of the Scripture*, and were now preſſed to joyn in with that Profeſſion of the *Chriſtian Faith*, which is moſt exactly conform to the ſame, in the *genuine*, and *perſpicuous ſence* thereof.

In the ſecond *place* he hath ſought to know, how he could imbrace the *Popiſh Creed*, and adventure his Eternal ſtate thereon; or how he could extinguiſh his *Reaſon*, and *Conſcience*, ſo far as to believe that the *Holy God would ever impoſe ſuch a Faith upon men, as this is*; 1. Where he muſt abandon theſe Principles of *natural Reaſon*, in the moſt neceſſary uſe thereof, which God hath himſelf *planted* in mans Soul; ſo as not to *truſt* his *own Eyes*, but others in that great Intereſt of his *Eternal State*; and with his own conſent be ſhut out from all proper knowledge of the *rule* of his Religion; yea account a *blind*, and *unlimited Obedience to men*, amongſt the higheſt *Excellencies of Faith*. 2. Where he muſt at once believe the *Fulneſs*, and *Perfection of the Scripture*; (which is not only fitted for that great end of *bringing Mankind to God*, but for ſuch an *univerſal uſe* herein, as to make the *Simple wiſe*, and cauſe the *Poor to receive the Goſpel*;) and yet believe alſo, that it is a *Maſs of dead, and unſenſed Characters*, until the *Romiſh Clergy* put a juſt *Senſe* thereon, tho its *Senſe* and meaning is the very *Soul* thereof. Yea thus paſs from the *Letter* of the ſame, and all Certainty of its Truth, (from *Intrinſick Evidences*, and theſe *Marks*,

Marks, and *Characters of its Divinity*,) whereby the *Chriſtian Cauſe* could be maintain'd againſt *Pagans*. 3. Where he muſt believe alſo that theſe are the Words of Chriſt, *Joh.* 7. 17. *If any man do my will he ſhall know my Doctrine, whether it be of God or not*, and that men *err through not knowing the Scripture*, Mat. 22. And yet believe all the while, that theſe *ſacred Fountains of Light* ſhould *be ſhut up, to keep men from Errors*; and that the ſole right of underſtanding the ſame, belongs to a *few*, not to the *Multitude*; who yet can pretend no extraordinary *Aſſiſtance, or Revelation* herein, nor will themſelves come to theſe *waters of Jealouſie to be tried*. 4. Where he muſt needs believe that the Scriptures are the *Oracles of God committed to the Church*, to give anſwer in every dark Caſe, *Rom.* 3. 2. The *Type and Form of ſound Doctrine*, Rom. 6. 17. Unto whoſe *Sentence* in all matters both of *Faith and Practice*, we are expreſly referred, *Iſa.* 8. 20. And yet *believe* alſo, that it hath no *Authority*, or *Deciſive Voice*; but what is *Precarious*, and dependant on the *Romiſh Church*. And thus Conſent to have the whole *Chriſtian Faith Viſibly unhinged* of the *Foundation of the Scripture*; and ſubjected to a *Supream*, *Viſible*, and pretended *Infallible Judge* here in the Earth, with ſuch a claim of *Dominion over the Faith of the Saints*, as the *Apoſtles of Chriſt* durſt never own, but did fully diſclaim, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. 5. Where he muſt believe that *Jeſus Chriſt* came for this end, to *ſave loſt man*, and by one *Offering hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*, Heb. 10. 18. And yet joyn with the ſame, a Faith of a *human Satisfaction for Sin*, ſo as men may both *Merit*, *Mediate*, and *Supererogate*, go above what is needful for themſelves;

and

And ſo be ſaved in the ſame *way of Life*, which was by the *Covenant of Works*; aſcribing no more to *Chriſt* than the giving Salvation to mens own *Merits*; which their own *Intrinſick Value*, and *Condignity*, doth require as a *Debt*. 6. He finds not how in the ſame *Creed* he could poſſibly hold by *one Mediator betwixt God and Man*, where a *Plurality* for this end is admitted; and by the reality of *Chriſts human Nature*, and his having a true and *finite Body*, which is ſubjected to have a *new created Being*, each time in the *Conſecrated Hoſt*; or believe the Truth of his *Sufferings* as now fully accompliſhed, and to be *repeated* no more, when it is in that *daily Sacrifice of the Maſs ſtill offered*, as a *Propitiatory Sacrifice for the Living and the Dead*. So on the moſt ſevere, and impartial inquiry, he cannot find how one holding theſe *Principles* ſhould go a further length than *Morality*; or claim another ſtanding than by a *Covenant of Works*. 7. Nor knows he how to believe at once the Truth of the *Goſpel*, to be a *Doctrine of Holineſs*, and *Infinite Purity*, and yet joyn in the ſame *Faith* ſuch an *Indulgence* for men to *Sin*, that *Money* may ſtand for *Merit*, and the *Rich* may have the moſt *eaſie* and *large Entry* into Heaven. Conceit that it is a *Priviledge* for men to *deſtroy themſelves*; and by External *Severities* and Penance to the Fleſh, (like to the *Lancing* and *Gaſhing of Baals Prieſts*,) ſupply the room of *Chriſtian Mortification*. 8. Yea he finds it not poſſible to *believe*, that *Sin can only be expiated* by the Blood of Chriſt; and is his alone Work, who hath *purged our Sin himſelf*, Heb. 1. 3. Or that there are more than *two ways* that lead to a *twofold State* of men; (a *Strait* way which leads to a *Life*, and a *Broad* unto *Deſtruction*, Mat. 7. 14.)

and

and yet believe that there is a *Purgatory* after this where men muſt be *tormented* and ſuffer *extream Pains*, to expiate ſuch *Venial Sins*, as their Prayers, and *Penances* here could not do; yea he is made to wonder how any who believes ſuch a thing, can ever have *true Peace, or Comfort in the World*; concluding that Papiſts do either take it as a *Fiction*, or forget themſelves, when they are *chearful*. For the fear of ſuch a *place*, the Uncertainty of *Releaſe*, and how long a *term* it may be ere this *Purging Work be compleat*, (when their own *Writers* Aſſign no leſs time, than 10000 *Years* as needful to *ſatisfie* for ſome *Sins*,) and fear leſt it prove a *real Hell*, muſt ſtill be a piercing terrour; nor can he believe that ſuch poſſibly do *Credit* themſelves herein, who aſſume this Power to *Change the Condition of the Dead*. Since were it really *believed*, that the *Keys* of ſuch a *Priſon* were here in mens hands, and Folk could, by the largeſt Bribes *to the Romiſh Church*, get a ſafe Deliverance thence; it were not ſtrange to ſee the *Temporal State of Chriſtendom* in a ſhort time made over to theſe. We ſhould Judge they were in a ſtrange manner indeed priviledged above the whole reſidue of men, who by ſuch a *Power over the World to come* could make ſo eaſie a *Purchaſe over this alſo which is preſent*. 9. He finds, and is ſure he could never get his *Reaſon* and *Conſcience* brought to ſuch a *Faith*, even tho he made a *feigned* Profeſſion herein, of that *pretended Supremacy of* Peter *as Biſhop of* Rome, on which the whole *frame* and ſtructure of the *Papacy* leans, and the *Vertue of all the Pardons, and Abſolutions* founded thereon; on which ſo many have adventured into an other World; except he would thus *build on the Sand* on-

ly, but not on *the Rock.* 10. He finds alſo how ſuch an *Erection* of the *Goſpel Church* in her Militant State here, as the *Papacy* in its *complex frame* is, united in ſuch an *Head*, as the Pope, (who as the *ſole Vicegerent of Chriſt* in the Earth, is at once inveſted with a *Civil Monarchy*, and *Univerſal Empire* over the *Church*, to *impoſe*, and *judge* in the higheſt Tranſactions which relate to the *Eternal State*, and *Immortal Souls* of Men,) is a thing that as to *Matter of Right*, is as *Forreign to the Scripture*, and inconſiſtent therewith, as *Mahumetaniſm* can be. And as to *Matter of Fact*, is a *Truſt* that no *created Being* could ever Exerciſe. 11. He ſees, and is ſure that he muſt either loſe ſight both of the *Rule*, and *Spirit of the Goſpel*, or have a juſt abhorrence of that way, wherein he ſhould be inevitably *Involved in a Virtual Conſent, and Acceſſorineſs* to all that *Cruelty*, and *Blood* which for ſo many Ages hath been ſhed therein ; when it's ſo clear that this was no *Exorbitance* only of *Practice* ; but a Native reſult of their *Tenets*, and *Principles*, and not only *diſpenſed* with, but counted an highly *Meritorious* Service ; yea when it is ſure that under no *Secular Government* of the moſt *Tyrannical State* that ever was in the World, hath ſuch *Arbitrary Violence*, and *Oppreſſion* been exerciſed. Or ſo much Innocent *Blood* been ſhed, as by this party. 12. And tho his Judgement ſtood indetermined, and in an *equal Ballance* upon this great Controverſie, he could not exerciſe Reaſon, and not ſee upon what *Hand* ſuch a *Deciſion* is, as was in *Solomons time* of the *true Mother of the Child* ; and who do moſt *ruefully* ſeek to intereſt themſelves in the imminent *Hazard* of the *Chriſtian Faith*, and who under the leaſt influence of any *Temporal*

ral Motives do this day ſtand for the *Truth* and *Subſtance of Chriſtianity*, and plead that it be not deſtroyed in envy and hatred to them; or on what ſide it is likely that this manner of *Conqueſt* is moſt followed to gain men to the Profeſſion of the Truth by a *prevailing Evidence* of their own *Light*, and Judgment herein, and to require their exacteſt *perſonal Tryal*, and *enquiry* about the ſame.

In the third place, tho he ſees there can be no pretence of *Doctrinal Wavering* about the *Reformed* Religion, and finds it not eaſie to comprehend how in one and the ſame *Age*, wherein the *Truth* hath ſo brightly ſhined, this way of *Popery*, ſhould have *Prevalence*, or gain ground any more, by *Seduction* with *Arguments to the Reaſon*, or *Conſcience of* any; yet ſince it is an hour *of Temptation*, and of *Fainting*, above all that have been hitherto known, and mens eyes *are Arreſted* with ſuch a *Proſpect* of the times, as is like to *Stagger* the *Faith* of the moſt eſtabliſhed; he is preſſed, (as counting it one of the higheſt *Duties* of this day,) to know and ſearch out what may afford greateſt *Aſſiſtance* to his *Faith*, from the *Diſpenſations of* Providence therein, and to know the *Evidence*, and *Strength* of ſuch *Reflections* as theſe are for this *End*.

1. That it's ſure, as the *ſmalleſt things* which the Lord does afford, to ſtrengthen and ſupport againſt ſuch a *Storm*, ſhould be ſeriouſly *improved*, and taken to Heart; ſo does it lay us in the way of that *Promiſe* for having *greater things* given to our *Obſervation*; yea that now is the time when ſuch as have been moſt comforted by the Word of *Promiſe*, may be put to the ſoreſt *Tryal* in their *Faith* of any, to keep off ſtumbling at the *Work of* Providence; and be thus

tryed according to the meaſure of theſe *Confirmations*.

2. Tho the *Churches Declinings* under greateſt meaſures of *Light* may be too viſible, and that Religion gains not by *Perſecution* as formerly, with ſuch an amazing change as is now in her External Condition, yet he ſees it to be no ſtrange thing, when moſt ſignal *warnings* have gone before of ſuch a Tryal with too evident *Diſpoſitions* towards the ſame, and diſcovery of its approach in all the *Cauſes* thereof; yea might be forſeen by all, that the *Holy God* would not ſtill bear with an *Impure*, and *unenlivened* *Profeſſion* of the *Pure* and *Glorious Truth of Chriſtianity*, which hath now long been one of the moſt ſad, and mortal *ſigns* in the *publick ſtate* of Religion; nor can it be found that ever any *Church* did decline and fall from the *Purity* of the Truth, and loſe ground herein by External *Perſecution*, where a judicial departure of its *Life* and *Power* did not remarkably go before; ſo as it is not of late, this hath been clearly *preſaged*, that ſome dark and unuſual meaſure of tryal from *Antchriſt*, and the laſt Havock *of* the *Reformed Churches*, was drawing near, which would be ſore ere it had done its work.

3. He ſees alſo, how this preſent hour is not more ſearching and *dark*, than it may be *clear* herewith, 1. That now after the *iſſue* of that Oppoſition, which was betwixt the Chriſtian Faith in the *firſt Entry* of the Goſpel, and that dying Apoſtate *Church of the Jews*; and next, with the *Pagan Empire*, after that new Erection of the Goſpel Church among the *Gentiles*, which is now over; ſo is the greateſt *Tryal* of the *latter* days fixed on the *Deciſion* of that long depending *Controverſie betwixt Chriſt, and Antichriſt*. 2. That according to the Scripture we muſt believe

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that as *after the manner of Egypt*, that glorious *Triumph* and *Delivery* of the *Church from Antichriſt* will be ſurely carried on; ſo the more near it comes to the *laſt aſſault*; (and when this falls in to have its *proper room* in the *Frame* and Adminiſtration of Providence;) the greater *Extremity*, *Terrour*, and *Darkneſs* may be expected alſo, ſuch as hath not been in any former time. Yea with that *united* and *formidable Conjunction* of Strength and *growing Succeſs* of this Adverſary for a time, that the moſt eſtabliſhed Chriſtians may be in hazard to ſtagger. 3. That now is the day wherein the Lord will have men know what it is to have the *Bible* as the alone *Security* of the *Proteſtant Religion*, on which they muſt entirely reſt no leſs than as it is the *ſole Rule* and *Standard* thereof; which is a *Tryal* worthy of all that expence of the *Pain*, *Anguiſh*, and *Wreſtlings*, that can now poſſibly attend the ſame.

4. Whilſt the *great Standard of Antichriſts Kingdom* is viſibly ſet up, and brought to the *open field*, as it's this day in the *Church of France*, and all humane help taken out of ſight; yet does he ſee herewith, 1. How this now is concluded, as the moſt *infallible Remedy* to recover *Popery*. And that *Argument*, to which they muſt truſt more than to *Peters Keys*, to wit, theſe *Sanguinary Laws* by *the Sword*, and *Rack*, which they have again betaken themſelves to, tho ſuch an *Argument* the Scripture never knew, which ſober *Heathens* would abhor, and which gives up the *Credit* of all Religion to *Atheiſm*. 2. That there can be no more evidence of a *deſperate and ſinking Cauſe* than is here, and nothing elſe can ſupport it, but theſe *weapons* which are not againſt the *Conſcience*; or by any terrour of the ſecond *Death*, but of

the *firſt*. 3. That this is ſuch an *Argument*, (if they have not in a ſtrange manner forgot,) which hath within theſe 100 *Years* been ſo fully *Anſwered*, and by ſuch an immediate Appearance of God in the *Kingdom of France*, that according to theſe meaſures of Cruelty againſt the *Proteſtants* there, ſo was it returned in a *deluge of their own Blood*, yea ſo both the publick ſtate of the Church and Faith of the Saints in the Truth was more deeply rooted; and tho we yet ſee not the end of *theſe wonders*, but the *Dark-ſide* only of the Diſpenſations of ſuch a day, yet do we know this *ſore Rod* on the Church, is but as the *Saw* and *Ax in the Carpenters hand*, who ſhall never *undo* that *glorious Work* which Chriſt hath done, and is ſtill further perfecting on the ruins of *Antichriſts Kingdom*.

5. Tho ſome unuſual *deeps*, and *Methods of Subtilty* be now on foot alſo againſt the Truth; yet he cannot but ſee how nothing could more effectually tend to confirm the *Proteſtant Cauſe*, and take the *Credit of Popery* off the Conſciences of thoſe in their *own Profeſſion* who are conſiderate and in the leaſt ſerious herein; when the World muſt thus ſee, 1. How eaſie it is for ſuch to take any *Meaſure*, *and Latitude* in the *Doctrinals* of their Profeſſion, when this can moſt ſerve the juncture of ſuch a time, and *heighten* or *narrow* the Controverſie betwixt them, and the Reformed Church at their Pleaſure; ſo as to *Sacrifice* the *Church of Rome* unto the *Court of Rome*, if no leſs can ſecure that end. 2. That the moſt horrid *Turkiſh Slavery* over mens Bodies comes no ſuch length, as that ſtrange *claim* that theſe now make of an *abſolute Empire* over mens *Conſciences* by the *Sword*; and to put them to ſuch a *Tribute* of their Obedience, that they

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ſhall then be ſecure, if they but come the length to Sin againſt their Light, and adventure on ſo ſmall a thing as to go to *Hell, and periſh Eternally*; ſince it's an external and feigned Profeſſion of ſuch away that they do thus force from thoſe, who (they ſee) cannot in Faith be perſwaded hereof. 3. Yea it hath been too viſible how much that *Maſter-plot*, and *Engine*, hath in theſe times been working, to take men firſt off from all *Senſe* of Religion, and deſtroy them in the *Morals of Chriſtianity*, to make this *Conqueſt* more eaſie, that ſuch may have no *Inward Defence*, and ſupport againſt the terrour of *humane Violence*. Yea in this way, when they have ſought how to *divide Proteſtants among themſelves*, and betwixt *Rulers*, and them, this ſeems the *laſt* and greateſt Engine of all, how to *divide betwixt them, and their God, Acting the ſame Plot*, which was laid betwixt *Balak* and *Balaam*, as knowing that it's no naked ſhew or Profeſſion of the *Reformed Religion* they need fear, ſo much as that *Old Proteſtant Spirit* in the *Power* and *Life* thereof, before which their Intereſt could never ſtand; and dread nothing ſo much as the *reviving* hereof, which as the *hand-writing upon the wall* did ever more threaten the fatal ruine of that Kingdom, than any *Humane* Power, or Strength.

6. Here alſo he finds juſt cauſe of Aſtoniſhment, how *Kings, or great Men* in the Earth ſhould give their Power to ſupport the *Romiſh Intereſt*, which hath been ſo viſibly deſtructive to theirs: When its not poſſible to deny how it's *firſt* advance, and progreſs to that *Supream height*, which i once attained; and the *declining* of the *Civil Empire*, did by the ſame *ſteps* go together; until *Magiſtracy* was turned as unto a *dead Image, and Shadow*, except its

being *enlivened* by their *breath* and Authority, as it was during the whole height of that Antichriſtian Power. Nor will it be denyed, that, in theſe *late times*, the *French Monarchy* was never more near its Diſſolution in its *right Line*, than by the *Catholick League* there; and it would ſeem not eaſie to be forgot, how *Henry the third*, who had moſt ſought to cruſh the *Proteſtants* there in purſuance of that *league*, was at laſt conſtrained to flee to ſuch for help; or by whom he was *killed*; and that *Heroick Prince Henry the Fourth*, who was firſt *ſtabbed* in the *Mouth*, and then in the *Heart*; yea that the publick *Records* of that *Nation* cannot poſſibly deny, how the *Houſe of Bourbon* owes its *Power* and *Preſervation* more to the *Proteſtants*, (without whom it had been fully extinct,) than *Ahaſhuerus* did to *Mordecai* the *Jew*, for what he found written in the *Chronicles of Perſia*, when the *Decree* was then paſt to deſtroy all the ſeed of the *Jews*.

7. As in no times paſt was ever a greater *Expectation* than is now, which way the *Scale* will turn, and what will be the end of theſe *wonders*, when the *neareſt events* of Providence are ſo dark and amazing; ſo does he find this, in ſome extraordinary way called for, *to be ſtill*, and *ſee what God will do for his Church*, and with humble Confidence look for ſome *Diſpenſation* as hath not hitherto been in this extream Exigence. And tho he do not appear in that *way*, and *manner* as in *former times*, that it ſhall be in a way more ſignally *glorious*, beyond what hath formerly been; yea does in *Faith* thus judge, that then is the *Churches day broke*, and hath found the ſure way of *her Strength*, and *right Line of Duty*; when her *Hope*, and *Confidence* is taken off from all

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viſible refuges, and entirely ſetled on her *inviſible Head*, and his *Promiſe* put to *ſuit* by *Prayer without fainting* herein. It is ſure the *Truth*, *and Faithfulneſs of God* ſtands ingaged for *Antichriſts fall*, as well as for *Salvation by Chriſt*, and ſince he hath *ſaid* this *Adverſary* ſhall be *broke* and brought down, it muſt ſurely be, *tho the duſt of the ground* ſhould riſe for this end, and now is the *Faith* of the Saints called for becoming the greatneſs of ſuch an *Aſſurance*, on which are the *Eyes of men*, of their own *Conſciences*, of the *Elect Angels*, yea of the *glorious God*, to ſee who does indeed *Credit* him in this day, when there is no ſenſible ſupport herein; and tho it now threatens ſorely the *departure* of many from the *Faith*, who had ſome viſible Profeſſion thereof, yet may it be hoped for, that the *turn of the next Tide* ſhall bring in more, with a *Solid*, and *true Increaſe to the Church*, than theſe ſad days do now *take off*.

CHARACT. VI. It is thus a *Confirmed Chriſtian* ſhould be ſpecially conſidered, as one who is not only at *reſt on the known certainty of his Faith*, but is *ready to render ſome account* of the *ſolid rational grounds* and *demonſtrations* hereof, *unto all who ask* after the ſame, and doth thus judge, 1. That theſe are the *proper* and *appointed means* which the Lord hath afforded for the greateſt *Confirmation* of mens Faith within time; yea preferable to any *external Miracles*, which are more extraordinary and remote *Aſſiſtances* thereto. 2. That theſe are given as ſo great *help to his Joy*, and *Excitement* of his Affections to *follow the Lord fully*, as make him wonder how the greatneſs of theſe things, which men are called to believe, can come near their thoughts, and yet no more take them up about this *Confirming*

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Work. 3. That the too viſible neglect hereof, both with reſpect to the *Youth* and *Community of Profeſſours* in the Church, ſeems one of the ſad, and *fundamental defects* of this day. The *Reaſons* hereof, with ſome clear view of theſe *means* which might moſt anſwer ſuch an end, are *briefly offered*, in this *preceding Work.*

CHARACT. VII. A truly *Confirmed Chriſtian* may in the *laſt place* be herein alſo conſidered, as ſuch whoſe *Faith being oft tryed* through all theſe *Stages of Chriſtianity* he hath been taken; hath ſome *proper Record* of the moſt *choice*, and *ſignal Confirmations of his Life*, to improve the ſame not only for his *own ſupport* in that *laſt warfare of death*, but for *ſtrengthning the Faith of others*; wherein he does thus judge, 1. That there could be no true ſupport or relief from *Religion* here in the Earth, if it cannot bear out then. And that *Death* is the great *Touchſtone* and *Trial*, when the true *value* and difference betwixt things of an *Eternal Truth* and *ſubſtance*, and the things of this *World*, will be beſt ſeen. 2. He reckons each real Chriſtian, by his Profeſſion then engaged and accountable, (even by ſome *explicite perſonal Teſtimony*,) to put to his *Seal that God is True*, and bear the ſame witneſs with his *laſt* and *dying breath* to the *Truth of Chriſtianity*, which he gave in the whole courſe of his Life; and of that *joy*, *complacence*, and *aſſurance of Mind*, which he hath found, and now hath in the way of Truth: So as to preſs the ſame on his *deareſt Relations*, as their alone true Intereſt. 3. He ſees alſo, how *honourable* it is for the Lord, that ſuch whoſe Faith hath been oft *tried*, (and when thus with *Joy*, and *Admiration* he can look back on the moſt preſſing and conſpicuous

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Conflicts of time,) ſhould have it their laſt work to pay in ſome *Tribute of Praiſe*, unto *him*, whoſe *Word*, and *Promiſe* unto them did yet *never fail*. 4. He accounts the more *weighty Tryals* he hath been carried thorow in his Chriſtian warfare, do both add more to this *Service*, and impart more to the *value* of ſuch a *Teſtimony*. 5. He judgeth this one ſpecial way, and advantage, whereby *one Generation might declare the Truth and Faithfulneſs of God unto another, in a Family Line and Relation, to ſhew* forth thus that the *Lord is upright*; that *he is their Rock*, and *with him is no Unrighteouſneſs*. Yea which ſhould be matter of unſpeakable Joy, when now in his *turn* he can ſay that ſuch hath the Lord been to him; what were *Davids* dying Words, 1 *Kings* 1. 14. *Who hath delivered my Soul out of all diſtreſs*, how that in no trouble, or *exigence* of his Life, he was ever left without a *door of Hope*, and thus alſo with *Caleb*, *Joſh.* 14. 10. To give in ſome ſuch *witneſs for God*, I am now near the *cloſe of time*, and do *teſtifie*, that the *Word of his Truth*, *and Promiſe*, he hath ſurely *accompliſhed*; which hath brought *me ſafe* and *honourably through*, when ſuch as did diſtruſt the ſame by *misbelief*, and ſought after another *refuge*, found all *their Confidences fail*. 6. And knowing likewiſe how great a *ſuprizal* Death may be; and that ſuch as have *ſhined* in their day, may yet ſet under a *cloud* and go ſilent off the *Stage*; he judgeth it the more needful to have ſuch a *piece of his dying work prepared*, as one of the choiceſt *Legacies* he can bequeath to his Surviving Friends, in a *ſeaſon* when it hath uſually the greateſt advantage of *weight* and acceptance: it being ſtill qualified with *Chriſtian Prudence*, and *Humble Sobriety*; ſo as all may ſee its whole in-

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tent is to *commend* to mens Conſcience the *way of Truth* and *Godlineſs* and not themſelves, and thus only direct, for the *proper uſe*, and improvement of their neareſt Relations. I know it may be ſtrange to ſome, what is ſpoke upon this Head; but as it's ſure the preſent day hath its *Duty*, and each time of our Life hath ſome *proper work*, ſo I humbly judge, that this ſeems to fall in, as *the laſt Service of a dying Chriſtian to his Generation*, to *deliver off his hand the Truth* which he had received and hath oft *proved*, with his *Confirmatory Seal* and *Teſtimony* thereto. And now in ſome more than ordinary way called for in this hour of great darkneſs, when if that Security of the *Abſolute Promiſes* ſtood not good to the Church, we might fear *Religion* might quickly wear out, and *Truth* periſh from the Earth; and as ſo ſolemn and weighty a thing ſhould be managed with much humble Prudence, ſo it may be judged that no ſerious, and *obſerving* Chriſtian, but hath ſome peculiar *ingagements* under which they find themſelves held even beyond others, yea ſome ſuch *Singular Confirmations* in the *Journal* of their Life, that ſhould not be eaſie to *hide* under the ground; where the *ſtrengthning of others* hereby is concerned, and that ſuch ſhould not then leave the *Croſs of Jeſus Chriſt* at a *loſs*, or part therewith without their *Teſtimony*, which hath left them at ſo great an *Advantage*. And though this is not to offer particular *Rules* in ſuch a Duty, but that *Chriſtian Wiſdom* muſt direct herein, as the preſent *Caſe is circumſtantiated*, yet might it be hoped, were this more taken to Heart, it ſhould be a ſingular *means* to make more deep Impreſſions of mens *dying Work* on their Spirits. Even whilſt they are in *health*, to *excite* their

their ſurviving Friends, and to keep *Religion* thus *alive* in a *Family ſtate*, and *Relation*, and gain a more venerable *reſpect* to the ſame on mens Conſciences; yea to *fix* alſo ſtronger *ingagements* on the *ſucceeding offspring*.

Thus is preſented here a ſhort *Idea* of the *ſolid and judicious Work of Chriſtian Confirmation in the Truth*, under theſe foregoing *Characters*, to ſhew how rare an attainment of Religion this is, yea to preſent herein a ſpecial *Series* and *Scale* of the greateſt *ſteps in this Confirmatory work*, by which it ſhould be followed. And where none of theſe may be parted from other, though ſome be of an higher, and more abſolute uſe for ſuch an end. And if it ſhould be objected here, What needs any ſuch expenſe of *time*, or *pains* in this Caſe, when it's ſure the Eſſential Truths of the Goſpel are not *queſtioned*, and that without *internal evidence* of the Spirit, no external means of this kind can be of uſe. I know that it's the alone work of the *Holy Ghoſt*, to beget a *Divine* and *ſupernatural Faith*; without which the furtheſt *Light*, and *Objective Evidence*, though backed with a continued Diſpenſation of *External Miracles*, could never bear Chriſtians out, either as to *Duty*, or *Comfort*, in their paſſage thorow time; yea nothing is in the leaſt here to ſubject the *Credit* of our *Faith* to mens *Rational Comprehenſion*, but rather tends to enervate wholly the ſtrength of any ſuch *Tenet*, and take off all pretence for the ſame: But it's ſure alſo, I muſt quit all *ſolid Security* in the way of Religion, and any clear founding in the *Light and Certainty of the Scripture*, or admit theſe things as undeniable, 1. That ſupernatural *Faith* is the moſt *highly rational Light* that's within time. And that none who profeſs the Name

Name of Chriſt can be of ſo low a *ſize*, as ſhould not be preſſed, and *excited* to be much about this *Ground-work* of knowing the *Truth*, and *Principles* of their Profeſſion upon its *own Evidence*; yea are thus called *as new born Babes to drink in the ſincere Milk of the Word*, 1 Pet. 2. Which, as it's clearly in the *Original*, is the *rational Milk of the Word*, to be thus received no leſs on *Conviction*, and *Certainty* of the Judgment, than with the out going of their *affections*. 2. That as it's not conceiveable how a *true* and *firm Aſſent* can be to *Divine Truth*, but on its *known Certainty*, ſo here is no *reſolving* of the Chriſtians Faith on the ſtrongeſt *rational Evidences* hereof, which muſt ſtill be *reſolved* on the *Teſtimony of God*, made clear and *evident to them* to be ſuch. 3. It is ſure alſo, the Lord hath not given ſo large a meaſure of theſe *Grounds*, and *Demonſtrations* of his Truth with ſuch *redoubled Arguments* of that kind, to be of ſo ſmall regard, as is with moſt. But for ſome *great*, and *univerſal uſe* hereof to the whole Church, and knew how needful ſuch *Aſſiſtances* to the Faith of his People would be, whilſt they are on the Earth. 4. That theſe *means*, which tend moſt convincingly to found a *rational Aſſurance* in the Judgment, are the proper *Vehicle of the Spirit of God*, by which his *ſealing Work*, ſhould be both ſought and expected; nor can I judge how the Credit, and uſe hereof ſhould be ſo ſmall, and not on the ſame Ground quit any *External Ordinance* of the Goſpel; which without the Spirit of the Lord can never profit, nor how we ſhould expect and ſuit his *Confirming Work* on the Soul, when theſe greateſt Confirming Means, which he hath given to the Church, have no juſt weight: But oh! how wonderful a Teacher is the Holy Ghoſt, when ſuch ordinary means fail, and are *inacceſſible*, by furniſhing his People then with theſe ſtrongeſt *Arguments of Love, and Power*, who having had but ſmall *Meaſures of Light*, yet were not unfaithful to improve the ſmalleſt degree of ſuch a Talent? 5. Yea ſo great a thing is it, to attain a ſolid *Faith of Things* wholly *remote from our Senſe*, and ſo far *above* the reach, and *Apprehenſion of Nature*, or to have an abſolute reliance on an *inviſible Refuge*, for our preſent and Eternal State, as no common Aſſent

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can anſwer, when the very *reſt and quiet of the Soul* muſt needs lie in the ſure and firm Perſwaſion hereof. 6. It is too viſible alſo how little the *Practical Uſe of ſuch a mean* hath yet been *eſſaied in the Church*, that all who are members thereof might no leſs know the *Strength and Firmneſs of the Foundation of their Faith* by its *own Evidence*, than the *General Articles* of Religion. The moſt uſual inſtructing work lies almoſt wholly about the *Noetick part of Divinity*, there ſeems not that ſerious regard to preſs the *Dianoetick* part hereof on Mens Conſcience, as if this were to be reſtrained to a few who are more Knowing, Learned, and of an Inquiſitive Spirit about the *rational Certainty* of the Truth, and for whom theſe choice and abundant helps of this kind, which are in this Age, ſeem more peculiarly directed. It's ſure, that the Chriſtian Faith in the *firſt-times* did remarkably then ſpread, and prevail, *by theſe clear* Evidences *hereof to the Judgment, made Effectual by* the Spirit of God, *more than by* extraordinary Miracles. Nor knew they otherwiſe what it was to be *Chriſtians*, but by imbracing the Truth with a full *Aſſurance of Underſtanding*, no leſs than of *Delight* and *Affection*. But if it be objected, it is not the Caſe now, where Religion is *planted in a Nation*, and hath an uncontrollable *Publick Profeſſion* under the ſupport of *Humane Laws*; I know no admitted weight this can have, except that ſhould be therewith, that Chriſtians now be Born, and not new-created. 7. Yea is it not ſure, (tho it ſeem little underſtood,) that the *primary Grounds*, and *Evidences* of our Faith are not only as to their *End demonſtrative* of the Truth, and Divinity of the Scripture, but are upon the *Matter*, ſuch *Demonſtrations* alſo which moſt natively reſult from the ſame by infallible *Conſequence*; and are thus to be accounted not as *Humane*, but *Divine Arguments*, given us by the Spirit of God. 8. I ſhall but further add, how ſuch as do ſeriouſly *ponder* things, will find this *Demonſtration* to be no more important than clear, *that to be a Confirmed Chriſtian, and a Confirmed Proteſtant are Convertible Terms*; and that if theſe that are under that Deplorable Bondage, and *Darkneſs of Popery* were but once *awaked* to ſee the *Truth*, and Certainty of the Chriſtian Faith, by its *Intrinſick* and *Objective Evidence*, and taken off that brutiſh Credulity, and Dependance on the alone Credit of others herein, it might be ſaid the *ſtrongeſt Engine* to hold up that Profeſſion were then broke, and we ſhould ſee the *Doctrine*, and *Rule of Faith* to be of ſuch *full*, and *perſpicuous Evi-*

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dence from the Scripture, as without *Blasphemy* they could not seek from the Lord to give them a *plainer Rule*, than what he hath there given.

READER,

IT'S *like you may think strange, how these* few Sheets *in the close fall in here, after the* foregoing part *was finished; but tho they meet in one Design, and Interest, yet was not this then intended until the former was done, and if it might tend to a solid use, and Fruit unto any, I shall forbear a further Apology herein. I may truly say, the weight of the* Subject *hath carried it some further length than was designed, when I so much sought to be short, as I aim at in any thing of this kind, that through my desire to avoid a unnecessary multiplying of Words, I fear lest it may make some thing seem a little dark at the first view: Tho I hope, not upon any serious perusal of the same.* Two *things I must further crave leave to add;* 1. *That when some* Succinct View *of the great Assistances and Confirmations of our Faith is here offered, which these of the lowest Capacity of the Church, might with that advantage improve, as in a few hours, by reading it some times over, may be so far impressed on their Mind and Judgment, that they could give some clear and judicious account thereof; it may be by such but seriously weighed, and taken to Heart of what concern the use hereof,* 2. *That I humbly judge also it were a most special Service for the Truth in this day, to have some short* Directory, *and remembrancer of the* great Acts of the Lord, *and* Monuments of his Providence *now under the New Testament, in that manner held forth as might most tend to some* Universal Use *of all within the Church. I Confess my desire pressed me to some small Essay herein, with intent to have joyned it to this Work, but having with much Conviction laid this wholly aside, as to any further appearance that way, so is it with an Earnest Desire, that some more qualified, might take to Heart and under their Hand so great a Service both for their Generation and Posterity. It is sure the Lord hath designed his People to be taught the greatness of his Works as well as the precepts of his Word, and as no Duty is more pressed than this under the Old Testament, both as to Publick and Family Instruction, so are we no less accountable in these last times for this Improvement of such as are of known, publick, and uncontrolable Evidence, and should be the care of each Age to have that Solemn Remembrance kept up hereof, so as not a few, but the very Multitude within the Church might be as a publick Library, and Repository of the same.*

FINIS.